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*Tenth Series*  
of  
**FAMOUS AMERICAN  
ATHLETES OF  
TODAY**

By  
**AL HIRSHBERG**  
and  
**JOE McKENNEY**



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## INTRODUCTION

### The Dawn of the Postwar Era of Sports, a Period of Golden Performances and Prosperity

THE birthplace of the postwar period, into which sports plunged with the ending of the Japanese War, was the army, navy and marine corps separation centers, which mushroomed all over the nation following the explosion of the atomic bombs and the advent of V-J Day.

In the long lines of servicemen, in khaki, blue or green, who daily went in one door as warriors and out the other as civilians, there were always the athletes. They had been gone from the gridirons, the diamonds, the rings, the courts, the rinks, and the tracks for one to five long years, and sports, cast into the deepest blackness ever known by our new nation, had missed them sorely. The grass on the gridirons had become long and unkempt; the dirt on the diamonds had been little trod upon, and all sports suffered equally in the reign of mediocrity. Now, with the return of peace, everyone, everything began to spruce up in preparation for

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the dawn of the new era, the post-World War II era which would make the Golden Days of Sport following 1918 seem as pallid and lusterless as false metal.

The soldier threw aside his gun for a baseball bat. The sailor walked out of the navy separation center with his seabag on his shoulder and his discharge papers under his arm, knowing that—at his own choice—the seabag tomorrow might be the iron ball of the shot-put, and the crook of his arm could—if he wished—hold tight to a football. The marine marched home to put Guadalcanal and the long lane of islands leading to Iwo Jima away with his memories and to look ahead to new days at Yankee Stadium or at the Los Angeles Coliseum, or at any of the countless thousands of sand-lots and stadia which are sandwiched in the nation between them.

It took some five months after the August dawn of V-J Day for sports to show a marked influence of the athletes being returned by the services. Professional hockey in its season of 1945-1946 was perhaps the first to benefit. Basketball of the same season jumped to a higher plane than it had known since the darkening days of 1941. At the same time the boxing arenas became jammed to capacity with eager, cheering, free-spending fans, if



not with talent, until it was said that a promoter could put a midget and an aged man into a main bout and sell out the house. The new era had begun.

It was a struggle, in most instances, for the athletes returning from their grim, arduous tasks of war to the games they had known before the conflict. The word readjustment suddenly made its appearance in the newspapers and was seized upon by the movies, coated with mush, and presented in many full-length features depicting the problems of the veteran returning to his old home town, his old job, and the wife and family life he had left behind him. The banker, who had led men on the battlefield, found it difficult to console himself with the heartless problems of money. The clerk, who had sailed the seas, was wracked with nerves at his old desk. Trivial tasks, which had been knocked off in daily routine before the war, now were difficult to perform, and annoying, because they were trivial. Hard work seemed the harder because a bit of the knack, a skein of the skill, had gone with the years.

Readjustment was a problem as well as a word with many of the athletes, too. It took time and work and concentration—and the ability to thwart aggravation and the urge to surrender at every

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turn—for them to regain the skill, the precision, and, perhaps most important of all, the mental attitude necessary for success in any sport. At this writing—nearly two years after V-J Day, some are still waging the battle. Those who have won it are now, in almost every instance, better athletes than they were before the war, and because of their courage and determination to forget the past and live with the future, sports are truly engulfed in a new golden era fast fighting to attain the high place of athletics in the years that made up the decade of the 1920's.

While the winter sports, including the steam-heated ones of gymnasium basketball and indoor rink hockey, showed the first signs of the renaissance of sport, it was in the spring of 1946 that the American fan knew definitely that his days of want were ended. The separation centers had dumped almost their full load back upon the civilian world by the time the major league baseball teams headed for their Southland training grounds, and the national sport was ready to reassume the high caliber of play worthy of the name, which was lacking during the years of war.

No better sign of the new times has been evidenced than that produced by the American League pennant race of 1946 as compared to that

of the season before. In 1945 the Boston Red Sox had staggered through the schedule and barely survived in seventh place in the final standing. Between the close of that season and the spring of the next, Ted Williams passed through a navy separation center, smiled when an interviewing officer asked if he wished to return to his pre-war job, and proudly pinned a discharge emblem onto his open-necked sport shirt, as he bade the United States Marine Air Corps farewell. Johnny Pesky, the peppery little shortstop, was also discharged from the Navy air corps, and Dom DiMaggio put aside his chief petty officer's uniform for that of the Red Sox center fielder. Tex Hughson came back from the army to the pitchers' mounds of the American League ball parks, and all the other services shared in returning to the Red Sox the talent they required to rise in one year from seventh place to the pennant, and to within one run of the championship of the world.

College football, which followed baseball as surely as autumn chases away the summer, offered additional proof that the sports world was again spinning correctly on its axis, and demonstrated anew the vast valley between the caliber of sports during the war and in the still new postwar period. In 1945 Alabama's Crimson Tide flowed

through its gridiron opponents with the ease of a wave demolishing a kid's sandpile on the beach. The Tide went on to the Rose Bowl and beat Southern California, 34 to 14, in the Rose Bowl game of New Year's Day, 1946.

Nine months later when another football campaign got under way, Alabama fielded a team boasting ten veterans of that championship array, but 'twas more than a new season; it was a new era. Four teams—Tennessee, Louisiana State, Georgia and Boston College—defeated Alabama with the utmost disdain, and the players of the Crimson Tide listened to the 1947 Rose Bowl game on the radio.

The process is still going on, and with each passing month sports are improving. It went on throughout the baseball season. As late as the latter part of August, 1946, George Munger returned from the army of occupation in Europe to the pitching staff of the St. Louis Cardinals, just in time to notch a couple of victories—just two, but they were enough to get the Cardinals a tie in the National League race, from which they went on to defeat the Brooklyn Dodgers in a two-game playoff and then the Red Sox in the memorable seven-game World Series.

There was yet another growth in sports as a

direct result of the war's end. This was the growth of dollar bills in the cash registers of the baseball clubs, the fight clubs, the college athletic associations, and of anyone or any organization sponsoring a sports event.

Fans found one drawback in this great boom. Tickets for the top-flight events in all the major sports became as scarce as hens in a big city. A new game sprang up and spread throughout the nation like the mah jong craze of the '20's; it was a game for adults called, "Tickets, tickets, who's got the tickets?" And, frequently, the answer was, "The speculators." In Boston more than half a million people applied for tickets for the three games of the World Series to be played at Fenway Park; there were approximately 60,000 available, and on days immediately preceding the games, black market quotations on the speculation market were \$50 a ticket and there were many customers.

Army and Notre Dame played the collegiate football clash of the century in Yankee Stadium, New York, in November of 1946. Yankee Stadium held its capacity 80,000 that day. Conservative citizens estimated that 250,000 people would have witnessed the scoreless tie, in which the game resulted, had there been space available.

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In Los Angeles, football fans rioted on the day tickets for the 1947 Rose Bowl game were placed on public sale. A long line waited overnight and grew with the dawn on the day of the sale. Short minutes after the ticket windows were thrown open, the supply for Mr. John Q. Public was exhausted. The windows were suddenly shut, and still the long line stretched as far as eye could reach. A wee bit of Hades broke loose then, and the immediate results included impassioned speeches in California's law-making bodies demanding a correction of the situation in the future.

The highlight of all ticket tribulations grew out of the offices of Mike Jacobs and the Twentieth Century Sporting Club in the early days of the first spring of the new era. All during the war years, fight fans had waited impatiently for hostilities to end so that they might again see the second showing of the contest of boxing skill between Joe Louis, the heavyweight champion of the world, and Billy Conn, the Pittsburgh puncher, who for twelve rounds on the 18th of June, 1941, had battled the champion on something better than even terms only to go down, in the thirteenth round, before the powerful punching of the king.

Throughout their army careers Louis and Conn

were pictured in the press of the country, of the whole Allied world, as tuning up on the Nazis and Japs for the day in peacetime when they would again fight to settle the issue left somewhat in the air after their first bout and the wartime cancellation of their scheduled second meeting by the Secretary of War, who decided that in the face of the existing situation it was impracticable for two of his hired hands to waste any of their energies in dispute for such a minor thing, at the time, as the world's heavyweight title. No story of the deeds of either Louis or Conn came out of the army camps in the States or from overseas without reminding the peoples of the United Nations that when the international mess was straightened out Mike Jacobs would see to it that their thirst for the blood of either Joe or Billy would quickly be satisfied. When, finally, Louis and Conn passed through separation centers, Mike had the contracts ready.

And then, as the June 19th date for the fight approached over the horizon of a couple of months, Jacobs announced that ringside seats would sell across the counter for \$100 apiece.

Nothing like that had ever been heard of before. Uncle Mike told doubting reporters that the public had demanded the price by the interest

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it had manifested in the event. It was nothing but his generosity, he said, that would permit him to allow the ordinary fan to see this mighty spectacle for such a nominal fee. And, after all, the Yankee Stadium, scene of the fight, was scaled down to only ten dollars for the seats in the bleachers. National wire picture associations thereupon serviced a picture, taken with a telescopic lens, showing how the ten dollar seats looked in the distance from the site of the ring near second base. Casual columnists hinted that, sure, the fans could see Louis and Conn for \$10, provided that they first invested in a set of surplus army or navy binoculars.

The bout itself was a disappointment. For eight rounds, Conn, who had carried the first fight right to the champion as few before him had dared, fought a different type of battle, climbing aboard his bicycle, as the sports writers are wont to say, and back-pedalling away from Louis in a display of strategy that backfired. In the eighth round, the champion caught Conn and the fight ended, as had the one before it, in a knockout; Joe Louis was still champion of the world and in all the might and glory of the new era of sports, not a logical contender for his title was in sight. Occupants of ringside seats tore up the stubs of their



\$100 tickets in disgust, or saved them as souvenirs to remind them in the future of their foolishness of the past.

The gate receipts of the show were also a disappointment. In the same casual tones with which he announced the \$100 price, Jacobs had predicted that the total receipts would total \$3,000,000, a new high which would dwarf the publicized and memorable million dollar gates prompted by Tex Rickard during the earlier golden days. The gate, announced after the fight, was an actual \$1,925,565—a sizable sum, to be sure, but still short of the \$2,650,000 paid to see Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney battle for the second time in Chicago on September 22, 1927, the night and the fight of the still-discussed long count. In death, Tex Rickard had survived as the heavyweight champion promoter of all time.

There are disappointing notes surrounding Golden Era II. One of the greatest is the lack of truly great fighters to emerge from the armed forces. Following World War I, a Gene Tunney marched out of the marine corps, a Jack Sharkey sailed out of the navy, and dozens of other ex-servicemen paraded into the civilian world to become great champions of the ring. In baseball a Ted Williams is riding the crest of international

publicity, a Stan Musial is manufacturing magnificence, a Bob Feller is blinding batters with his speed, but an objective sports world, still waiting to be shown, refuses them the accolade of worship reserved for Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb and Walter Johnson of the past. No individual has yet arisen as a threat to blot out the fame of Red Grange on the gridiron, of Bill Tilden on the tennis court, of Jesse Owens on the track. In the animal kingdom there is no new Man O' War.

But the new era is still in its infancy. The period following World War I is measured in the span of the decade of the entire 1920's; it overflowed in a measure beyond the crash of 1929, through the 1930's, and, though on a definite decline, right up to the day of Pearl Harbor. The new postwar world, at the writing, is still suffering the jitters of the hangover of six long years of war. In sports this has been evidenced by the insane boom which swept the seasons of 1946. There are already signs of a levelling off. In the early days of the Florida winter racing season of 1946-47 the tote handle at the horse tracks had fallen off the lush amounts of the previous year by nearly \$100,000 a day, and sportsmen saw in this one fact the harbinger of saner, and happier, days to come for all sports. With their fingers on the pulse of

the situation, they feel certain that the best years in sports history are still ahead; that when the present-day gold rush is ended and normalcy returns there will be a greater Golden Era which will be truly golden. It will not be gilded in the daffy, flagpole-sitting style of the '20's, but a steady, well-managed period of prosperity and record-breaking performances with even greater rewards of money and fame for the stars of tomorrow. Of the present they say, in the manner, words and tone of a circus barker:

"This is only the beginning, folks—only the beginning!"



FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES  
OF TODAY  
TENTH SERIES



FELIX BLANCHARD  
AND GLENN DAVIS

*“The Touchdown Twins”*







FELIX BLANCHARD AND GLENN DAVIS



## CHAPTER I

FELIX BLANCHARD AND GLENN DAVIS  
"THE TOUCHDOWN TWINS"

IT WOULD be impossible to record faithfully the athletic annals of the early 1940's and not to include pages of print, mostly adjectives, on the careers of Army's touchdown twins, who rode rough-shod over the gridirons of the nation from 1944 through 1946. Felix Blanchard and Glenn Davis came to West Point in 1944 from opposite ends of the United States. When, more than two years later, a late November sun set behind a football field in Philadelphia, they had completed the collegiate gridiron portion of their athletic lives and, by their merits, had written their names in golden letters to be honored in greatness from coast to coast. It has been written that they were the two greatest football players ever to compete on one team. It has been written wisely. It has been written well.

Blanchard and Davis. Davis and Blanchard. Throughout the seasons of 1944 and 1945, their

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names meant the ultimate in mightiness on the gridiron. Not a team could stop them. Not a team could hold its own with the mighty Army elevens of which they were the foundation. With the coming of 1946 and the ending of the war, 'twas said that now the Touchdown Twins would meet their match. Somewhere in the nation, opening its arms to its returning servicemen, would arise a team to beat Army; somewhere, a body of eleven young men to end the almighty magnificence of Blanchard and Davis.

The 1946 season came and went. Notre Dame and Army locked shoulder pads in what had the advance billing of the most intense college football game ever scheduled. Notre Dame and Army rocked and ran and tore and tackled through sixty of the most gruelling minutes ever ticked off on a chalk-lined field. When the day and the game were done, the Touchdown Twins had not scored. The game ended in a scoreless tie. But the Notre Dame players said amidst their sorrow at not winning that they had never encountered anything like the terrific backfield play thrown against them by Blanchard and Davis. Yet a few weeks later, an inspired Navy eleven rose out of the depths only an underdog can know and all but beat that Army team. The final score was 21-18, but so

close was the margin that the game ended with sailors gazing right down the barrels of Army muskets. The Navy would have won, would have turned in one of the great upsets of all time, but for the fact that they were unable to cope with the brilliance of Blanchard and Davis in the first half.

In Philadelphia that November afternoon, the sun set on the collegiate grid careers of Army's Touchdown Twins. They had met the test of 1946. They had survived the steamroller of Notre Dame. They had weathered the fight and luster of the Navy. They could stand with helmets off and heads high, knowing that their names, a tandem like the title of a song, would ever be symbolic of an era in the football history of the nation.

Blanchard and Davis. Davis and Blanchard.

There comes to mind, as a sidelight to their brilliance, the story of a sports writer who was forced to wait two and one-half years to see the Twins in action. For the two seasons of 1944 and 1945, he was serving in the navy, bounding from port to port but never to the right port where the Army team might be playing. The sports writer in sailor's clothing never lost his interest in football, and he read with avid interest of the weekly wonders of the Touchdown Twins, Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside, the West Point cannons, and all the other

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terms of endearment the still practicing sports writers were coining like gold during the rush of '49.

When he was finally discharged prior to the 1946 season, he wanted only the opportunity to see the Army team and its tandem of touchdown reapers. It wasn't until about mid-season that the opportunity presented itself, when he was assigned to cover the West Point-Duke game at the Polo Grounds in New York City. Army won the ball game 19-0, and though neither scored over the ground, Mr. Inside (Blanchard) went both inside and outside the Dukes, and Mr. Outside (Davis) went through, around and under them, until our sports writer turned to those others around him in the press box and said, "They're terrific. What a pair of backs! What you fellows have been writing about them is true."

"Phooey!" replied the writers in a chorus. "This is the worst game they've ever played. You should see them when they're really in form."

The ex-sailor looked a bit surprised at this, but he calmly turned aside and made a note in his little black book. "All American backs for sure—Blanchard, Davis, Army."

When the All American selection boards of the nation's newspapers, magazines, press associations

and sundry other organizations, which consider it their bounden duty to the public to announce annual all star elevens, met at the conclusion of the 1944, 1945 and 1946 seasons, their work was automatically cut two-elevenths. The sages would gather around their tables, look each other square in the eye and say:

“Okay. We’ve got Blanchard and Davis in the backfield. Now let’s fight over the other nine.”

The towns of Bishopville, South Carolina, and Claremont, California, are two thriving communities as far separated as the map of the United States can place them. The Carolina countryside was the gridiron cradle for Blanchard. California’s much publicized sun shown down on the youthful athletic efforts of the boy who was to become his twin, Davis. Through their boyhood days neither could have dreamed that he was to become Mr. Inside, or Mr. Outside, that he would join with another young athlete from the opposite end of the nation on the plains of West Point to be one of the most famous pair of athletes in America.

Before the twins had completed their final year at West Point, All American honors were trivial occurrences for both of them. In 1945, the season he scored 19 touchdowns, Blanchard won a shelf-

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ful of trophies as bronze, silver and gold testimony to his prowess at football. There was the Heisman Memorial Trophy, awarded to the outstanding football player in the land. There was the Maxwell Club of Philadelphia award and the Walter Camp Trophy. The Sullivan Trophy, symbol of the National Amateur Athletic Union for the best amateur athlete in the nation, was voted as the rightful possession of Felix Blanchard and rested for one year as his property in the cup-crowded cupboard at the Military Academy.

Davis' honors were divided between the years 1944 and 1946. In his first season of collegiate football he annexed the Walter Camp Trophy and the Maxwell Club award, while the *Los Angeles Times* voted him "the player of the year." In 1946, the Associated Press discovered that he was "the athlete of the year." He was voted the Heisman award. And when the Sullivan Trophy was voted to Arnold Tucker, the quarterback on that same Army team, who was often called the unsung hero of the squad in the face of the publicity monopoly of the Touchdown Twins, there was a story to go with the award. Davis' name, through an error, had been omitted from the balloting.

On these trophies the names of West Point's wondermen will be engraved so that the future



may know of their deeds. But trophies at best are inanimate. The true story of their glory will be told for football seasons to come by the thousands of fans, who watched with their own astonished eyes as Blanchard and Davis—Davis and Blanchard—tore up the nation's gridirons with their cleats and completely mastered the other great football elevens of the country, save Notre Dame alone, with two-man speed and power that reached the very ceiling of perfection.

On the 11th day of December, 1924, in the township of McColl, South Carolina, Felix A. Blanchard was born. His father, a medical doctor, now deceased, had been a football star at Tulane and Wake Forest in his own college days. After the family had moved to Bishopville, young Felix was sent to St. Stanislaus School in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, where his abilities at carrying a football through human walls of granite first became known. In late December of 1939 a Boston College eleven trained at St. Stanislaus School for its game with Tennessee in the Sugar Bowl on New Year's Day, 1940. Boston College's coach of that day heard about Blanchard from the school principal, Brother Peter, and then saw the lad in action. Some seven years later that same coach, Frank Leahy, who had moved on to Notre Dame,

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was to see that same Blanchard in action once again, as the Cadets and the Fighting Irish met in their clash of the century at Yankee Stadium in New York.

From St. Stanislaus, Blanchard entered the University of North Carolina, where he played one year of freshman football. From there he received his appointment to the United States Military Academy.

On the 26th of December, 1924, on the other side of the continent in Claremont, California, twins were born—Ralph and Glenn Woodward Davis. As Glenn grew and attended nearby Bonita High School, stories spread across the nation—they were printed in South Carolina papers, too—about the sensational athlete who was building a reputation as the finest ever to be developed in the high schools of the Sunshine State. Twin brother Ralph entered West Point. When time came for Glenn to graduate, he followed in his twin's footsteps. It was from Bonita High School that he received his appointment to the Military Academy, where still another twin awaited him.

Felix Blanchard and Glenn Davis met for the first time at West Point in 1944. Almost as soon as they shook hands on meeting, their names were linked together. As theater-goers speak in one

breath of Lunt and Fontanne, as gourmets delight in a discussion of ham and eggs, football fans of the nation began to talk of Blanchard and Davis, Davis and Blanchard.

The true saga of the Touchdown Twins began actually with the first football game on Army's 1944 schedule. Throughout the autumn practice sessions the rumor had flown down the Hudson to the word mills of New York newspaperdom that Army's guns were loaded, but it was not until Coach Earl Blaik unfolded his team one October afternoon that the football world knew it had some 16 inch shells left over from the battlefronts of the world. North Carolina was the opposition to test first the Army power. It was Doc Blanchard's old college, where he had played freshman football the season before. Blanchard started for the Army that day, Davis did not, but he saw quick action and plenty of it in a relief role at halfback. North Carolina, it was reported from the Southland, had a good ball club capable of testing Army's might, but when the smoke of battle had risen and the carnage was complete, the final score was "Kaydets" 46 "Tarheels" 0.

After that first football week of 1944, the sports writers of the nation took quick stock of the situation throughout the nation. Football, they de-

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cided, had gone off to war. The autumn faced the grid world as a bleak, weary season, but at West Point things were different. Earl Blaik, the head coach, had suddenly amassed one of the great football teams of all time. There would be no team that season, wrote the writers, to bother the Cadets at all, with the possible exceptions of Notre Dame and Navy.

How true that prediction had been was demonstrated with the passing weeks. Brown followed North Carolina to the chopping block, and the price quoted on this head was 59-7 for the Army. Then came Pittsburgh, 69-7, the Coast Guard Academy, 76-0, and Duke, 27-7. The following week the true might of Army's superiority was evidenced when war-weakened Villanova brought a struggling and straggling group of gridsters to West Point. Mighty Army tried its best to keep the score down that day. So great was their lead at the end of the first half that the final two periods were shortened to ten minutes' length from the ordinary fifteen minutes' duration. But Army couldn't hold its own power. It knew not its own strength. The final score was an overwhelming 83-0.

Through these first six games of the season one factor had battered its way through the standout

bulwark of Army's all around power. The Touchdown Twins, Blanchard and Davis, were riding the headlines of the nation's newspapers; their names were rivalling singing commercials for the most prominent place on the networks. People from coast to coast began first to tally, then to recount their feats, and always they would end up by scratching their chins, shaking their heads, looking askance, whistling in their beards, and saying, "Holy mackerel, they've got two more years to play, too."

Any football fan, who had not already hopped on the wagon of the Touchdown Twins, was quick to do so after Army's seventh victory of the season. It was Notre Dame—not the mighty Irish of pre-war years, but a capable Notre Dame team nonetheless—which wandered into Yankee Stadium that November Saturday afternoon in 1944.

Never before in its history had such a disaster fallen Notre Dame, the sages wrote when the battle was done. The memories of Knute Rockne, of George Gipp and the other Notre Dame greats of the past were called down to mourn the disaster, for certainly no mortal could do it justice with his tears. The score was Army 59, Notre Dame 0. Blanchard had not scored at all, but Davis had crossed the goal line three times. The former was

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used strictly as a decoy. Notre Dame had drilled to stop Blanchard. They were ready and waiting for his driving line smashes, his shifty broken field tactics. But Army merely faked giving him the ball, most of the time passed it to Davis instead, and Davis had a field day for himself. He ran wild. He intercepted Notre Dame forward passes in all parts of the field. And when the 59 had been posted as a final score, the sports writers wrote that Davis had been the big star of this game.

There then remained only Pennsylvania and the traditional rivals from the Naval Academy to be conquered before Army could completely enjoy the fruits of an undefeated, untied season. The once mighty Penn was easy. The Quakers fell the week after Notre Dame by a total of the same stunning proportions, 62-7. Navy was said to be mighty still. The circumstances of war had driven the bulk of the nation's football talent into the two academies, and while Army had reaped Blanchard and Davis, Navy had come up with the mightiest line in the nation. Navy, said the experts, would give Army quite a battle—yes, indeed, quite a battle.

It might have been a battle, at that, if it had not been for Blanchard and Davis. These two youngsters rode to their greatest glory that day. They

ripped the mighty Navy defenses apart. They sped or ploughed their respective pathways through the Blue and Gold frontier. Suddenly Davis took a lateral pass back of the line of scrimmage right on the midfield stripe. He raced toward the sidelines, cut back on his course for the last white stripe and sped into payoff territory for his twentieth touchdown of the 1944 season. Later Army was on Navy's nine-yard line. Blanchard carried over the Navy right tackle. Blue jerseys flew to the winds. Blanchard flew to glory.

In their first Army-Navy game, each of the Touchdown Twins had scored a touchdown, and their efforts were greatest in Army's 23-7 triumph, which established the "Kaydets" beyond all doubt or dissension as the nation's number one team.

More than that, it had established Blanchard and Davis as the nation's number one tandem of backfield men. Their names and fame spread from coast to coast, from California to South Carolina and beyond in all directions, and in that strange affinity which America adopts towards its heroes in any branch of endeavor, they quickly became Doc and Junior to just about everyone in the land. Doc Blanchard and Junior Davis. The sports writers monickered them with Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside, because in Army's T formation, Blan-

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chard was the master-man carrying through the line inside the tackles, and Davis was the wonder on the wide end sweeps, outside the opposition's frontier.

There was little doubt in the mind of anyone but that 1945 would be even more an Army season than 1944, even more an autumn trail of triumph for the Touchdown Twins. And Doc and Junior saw to it that no one was disappointed, except their opponents. Army opened its second season in their reign by playing an army team from a camp in Kentucky. Playing? Slaughtering is a more apropos word when discussing any of the "Kaydets' " games that season. It was 32-0 over the soldiers; 54-0 over Wake Forest; 28-7 over Michigan. A team of PT boat sailors from Melville, Rhode Island, was torpedoed, 55-13; Duke succumbed, 48-13; and Villanova could cut the 83-0 of 1944 down to only 54-0 in 1945. Then again it was time for Army and Notre Dame.

All the Fighting Irish hopes for revenge were tottering that day at Yankee Stadium, and these petered out quickly in the early minutes of the game. The final score was Army 48, Notre Dame 0. Blanchard hammered his way to two touchdowns in the massacre, Davis shifted through broken fields and broken Irish hopes to three tal-



lies. The following week the duo romped again, against Penn, and the Quakers were driven into the misery of a 61-0 defeat.

The time had come for another Army-Navy game.

If Doc and Junior had been brilliant before, this was the contest of their complete magnificence. Navy was a good team with a creditable record, until the first fifteen minutes of play that afternoon. During that one brief period of football Blanchard scored two touchdowns, Davis one. During the remaining three periods, in which Army mounted its margin to a 32-13 final score, each added one more touchdown to his personal total as the 1945 football season passed into history—a history monopolized by the Touchdown Twins of Army.

The war had ended prior to that season, but the hangover of conflict still stymied the college football scene. With the dawn of the 1946 schedule had come the break of the real days of peace. Army would be great again, all agreed, but the other teams would be strengthened anew and now Blanchard and Davis would face the true test. Watch Notre Dame! Army now had 18 straight victories behind it. What lay ahead?

Villanova opened the "Kaydets' " season, and it

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was the same old story of yore, 35-0 for Army. In the early moments of the game, Blanchard had been injured, and Davis was forced to carry on without his football twin through that game and the two that followed. But Junior was senior to the task. He carried on and carried the Army to a 21-7 victory over strong Oklahoma, and he sparked the Cadets to a 46-21 victory over Cornell. The twins were reunited the following week, and celebrated by personally thwarting a threat from Michigan, 20-13. Against Columbia, Blanchard made one of the truly great plays of his career, proving that his health was completely repaired, when he caught a Lion kickoff and ran ninety-two yards as straight and speedy as a sprinter on a straightaway, without a foreign hand brushing him, to a touchdown that was one out of many in Army's 48-14 win. A sports writer saw them for his first time the following week against Duke and marvelled at their twin ability, although their more experienced Boswells said they were far off their usual game. Duke was beaten that day, however, and West Virginia fell the following Saturday by an identical score, 19-0.

No football game ever before had the advance billing of Army and Notre Dame of 1946. Throughout the war years and as Army romped to

its two one-sided triumphs over the Fighting Irish from South Bend, talk spread with the armed forces all over the world about Notre Dame's chances for revenge when it regained its postwar strength. During the entire season prior to the game, sports writers wrote of all other contests as subsidiary events leading up to the clash of this or any other century. The plains of West Point and the prairies of South Bend were overrun a week or more before game Saturday by reporters drawn from every section of the nation to chronicle each movement of the players and each word of wisdom breathed by the coaches, Frank Leahy and Earl Blaik. Notre Dame had certainly molded a mighty team in one short season; Army still had Blanchard and Davis, the reporters wrote in substance. Eighty thousand people jammed Yankee Stadium that day. Hundreds paid hundreds of dollars a ticket to speculators in and around New York. Millions listened in at their radios.

Few were disappointed in the game. It was one of the greatest college games ever played; it was the greatest scoreless tie ever played, for certain.

You will say that, in view of the score, Notre Dame stopped the Touchdown Twins. In the bitter struggle of the defensive might of the two teams, no back could break into the glory of being

outstanding. No one could penetrate across the goal line, through the bulwarks of humanity arrayed before him across the line of scrimmage. But Blanchard and Davis shone nevertheless that day. Defensively, they were magnificent, helping the Army defenders hold off the threat of Notre Dame's capably classy backs. Offensively, they could not score, which is, of course, the ultimate test, but they both performed with style and an ability that delighted the crowd and engraved their names even deeper in the nation's knowledge as the two best backs in America.

Their own only consolation, however, was the knowledge that at least Army had not been beaten.

The final two weeks of the college grid careers of Blanchard and Davis were additional days of their might. Postwar Penn was mighty again, but when Doc and Junior rode out of Philadelphia after that game, they left behind the quaking Quakers buried under a 34-7 score. That left the last game in their lives—Navy. Navy, for a third and final time. Navy, to bid good-bye to college football and to leave behind one of the greatest records in the history of that sport.

The story of that game will be told in the future whenever an underdog has to be inspired. Navy, a twenty-eight point certainty to lose in the opin-

ion of the experts, rose up from the depths and almost won. The Midshipmen were edged out 21-18, but the game ended with the ball Navy's and on the two-yard line of Army, and by that scant margin was a tremendous upset averted.

When the amazing battle waged by Navy was chronicled in long columns of newsprint, the sports writers turned back to discover why it was that Navy's gameness was not enough to win. This is what they discovered:

In the early part of the game with Army in possession of the ball on its own 42-yard line, Glenn Davis sped down the field to catch a forward pass. Quarterback Arnold Tucker made the toss, and the lightning-fast Davis outran the Navy defenders to take the ball and run to the Navy 14-yard line before he was downed. One play later, the same Davis took a lateral from Tucker, dashed around end for those final fourteen yards and the first touchdown of the day.

A few minutes later, Army had the ball on its own 46-yard line, with fifty-four long yards ahead to the Navy goal. The ball was given to Blanchard. Doc hit the Navy line with the light touch of a torpedo. Sailors as far away as Norfolk were scuttled by the force of that blow. He tore through that line and before anyone could make the move

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to stop him, he had covered those yards to the second touchdown for Army.

Still a few minutes later, Army had the ball on the Navy 27-yard line, and Davis became a passer. Junior took the ball and faded back from the line of scrimmage. To his left and down the field he saw a familiar figure. His touchdown twin. He drew back his arm and passed the ball. And Doc caught it going away for the third touchdown.

That was the last touchdown tallied for Army by Blanchard or Davis. Those three touchdowns, plus the resulted points after touchdowns, were the reason that Army was able to hold off the threat of inspired Navy that day, why the "Kay-dets" in the three years' reign of the Touchdown Twins were able to hold up to the world's admiration a record of twenty-eight games without defeat—of twenty-seven victories and that one tie with Notre Dame.

It was ended—the long trail through golden glory for Felix Blanchard and Glenn Davis. The sun that set that evening on Philadelphia marked the sunset of their collegiate football careers. They dressed slowly after the game, looked at each other with slight smiles and agreed, "It was a lot of fun." In cold figures, the Touchdown Twins had scored between them 537 of the 1,179 points Army had

totalled in those three years. They had crossed enemy goal lines 89 times in 28 games. Blanchard scored 38 touchdowns on his own and kicked three points after for a total of 231 points; Davis had 51 touchdowns to his credit for a 306-point tally.

In warmer terms, newspapermen who visited the beautiful academy above the Hudson to spread further the story of the Touchdown Twins had found them much alike and dressed alike in the uniform of the West Point cadet. They found them likeable lads, who took the full grind in the lives of the country's apprentice second lieutenants in stride with the glory they garnered in athletics. In addition to football, Blanchard is a shot-putter of merit. Davis holds the record at the academy for gymnasium versatility, is a member of the basketball team, and a baseball player worthy of serious consideration by major league teams.

To the credit of these two cadets neither permitted the headlines to go to his head. They remained unspoiled by their fame, popular with their classmates as they battled the text books from eight each morning to three in the afternoon, as they drilled after classes, as they studied through the evening hours, as they lived the army life through the years. A reporter tells of Blanchard a story of his kindliness. One day rushing to football

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practice after class, the All American met the young son of an instructor at the Academy. "Hi, Doc," said the boy. "Are you in a hurry?" Doc was, but he did not say so. He stopped and squatted beside the youngster and had a long talk, man to man style. Everyone at West Point heard about that incident eventually—from the lips of the thrilled boy, who was quick to add that Doc was the greatest guy as well as the greatest football player in the world.

Still another reporter tells of Davis an incident that occurred during June Week, the fiesta period when the cadets have their best girls as their guests for the graduation festivities. When the other cadets were introduced to Davis' girl, they discovered that his best girl was his mother. He had dedicated his entire June Week to her.

These are just the little things that make their big deeds on the gridiron the bigger. Blanchard and Davis. Davis and Blanchard. Their fame and their brilliance was equal from South Carolina to California and back again. Their achievements will always be noted side by side. And down through the years to come fans will talk about them as Blanchard and Davis for only one fair and logical reason: alphabetical order.



ARMY'S RECORD DURING 1944, 1945 AND 1946

| 1944                    | 1945                       |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| North Carolina.... 46—0 | P. D. Command (Ky.) 32—0   |
| Brown..... 59—7         | Wake Forest..... 54—0      |
| Pittsburgh.. 69—7       | Michigan ... 28—7          |
| Coast Guard.. 76—0      | Melville PT Base.... 55—13 |
| Duke . . . . . 27—7     | Duke.. . . . 48—13         |
| Villanova ... 83—0      | Villanova ... 54—0         |
| Notre Dame... 59—0      | Notre Dame ... 48—0        |
| Pennsylvania. . . 62—7  | Pennsylvania . . . 61—0    |
| Navy..... 23—7          | Navy..... 32—13            |

1946

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| Villanova... 35—0       |
| Oklahoma..... 21—7      |
| Cornell..... 46—21      |
| Michigan... 20—13       |
| Columbia ..... 48—14    |
| Duke . . . . . 19—0     |
| West Virginia..... 19—0 |
| Notre Dame..... 0—0     |
| Pennsylvania..... 34—7  |
| Navy..... 21—18         |

SCORING RECORDS

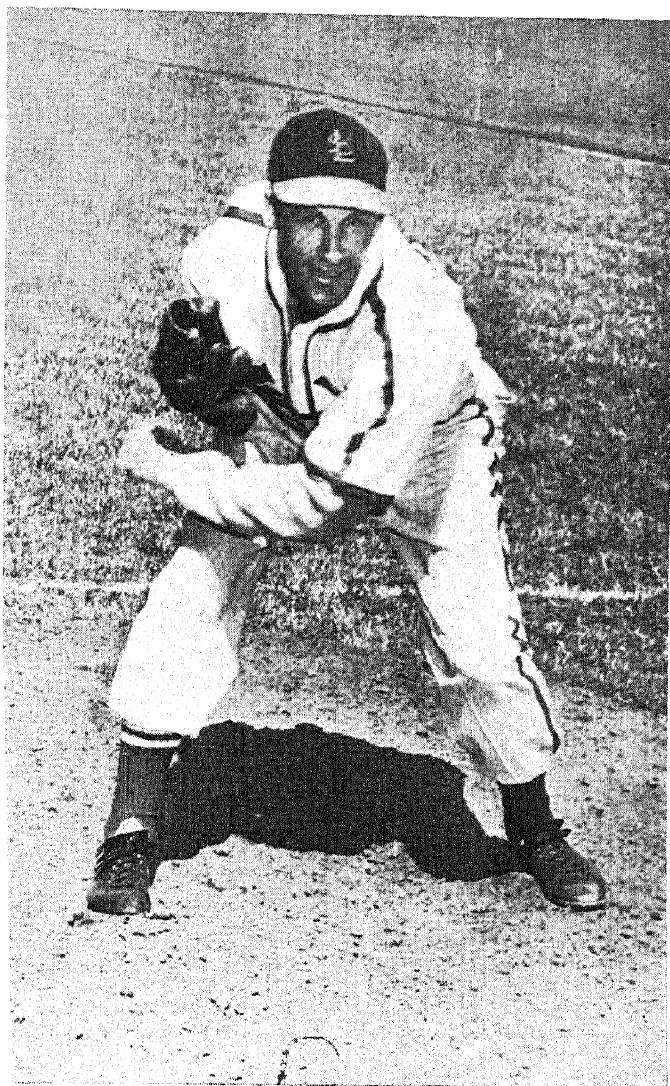
|              | Touch-<br>downs | Points<br>after<br>Touch-<br>down | Field<br>Goals | Total<br>Points |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Blanchard    |                 |                                   |                |                 |
| 1944.....    | 9               | 0                                 | 0              | 54              |
| 1945.....    | 19              | 1                                 | 0              | 115             |
| 1946.....    | 10              | 2                                 | 0              | 62              |
| Totals. .... | 38              | 3                                 | 0              | 231             |
| Davis        |                 |                                   |                |                 |
| 1944.....    | 20              | 0                                 | 0              | 120             |
| 1945.....    | 18              | 0                                 | 0              | 108             |
| 1946.....    | 13              | 0                                 | 0              | 78              |
| Totals.....  | 51              | 0                                 | 0              | 306             |



HARRY DAVID BRECHEEN

*“One Man Pitching Staff”*





HARRY DAVID (THE CAT) BREECHEN



## CHAPTER II

HARRY DAVID BRECHEEN  
"ONE MAN PITCHING STAFF"

**H**ALF-WAY down the long, narrow row of lockers in the dressing room of the Cardinals in St. Louis, a slight, gaunt, happy youth was accepting congratulations from a big, florid, smiling man, whose jet black hair clung wetly to his forehead.

"Son," said the big fellow, "I wish you were twins."

And, with that, Manager Eddie Dyer of the Cardinals, the big man with the black hair, threw his arms around his little ace left-handed pitcher, Harry Brecheen, and the two posed for long minutes for the benefit of photographers.

The scene took place immediately after the sixth game of the 1946 World Series, a game which the Cardinals had to win in order to keep the fall baseball classic running to its full seven game limit. They had gone into the contest trailing, 3-2, in games to the Boston Red Sox. If the Red Sox

had beaten Brecheen that day, the series would have been over.

But they did not beat Brecheen. They had not defeated him in the second game of the series, either, when the slim youth from Ada, Oklahoma, had pulled the Cardinals up to even terms with the Boston club, which had won the first game. When, in the sixth game, they lost to Brecheen for the second time, enabling the Redbirds to even the series again, the Red Sox thought they had seen the last of the man whom the baseball world knew as "Harry the Cat."

So did Dyer. That was the reason why the friendly Cardinals' manager laughingly and audibly wished that Brecheen were twins. When the "Cat" won that sixth game, it tied up the series, but the Cardinals still faced the seventh and deciding contest, and Brecheen would not be available. At 160 pounds, Brecheen never had been effective with less than four days of rest, and the Cardinals would be forced to play the deciding game within forty-eight hours at Sportsman's Park in St. Louis.

Although the odds should have been against the Red Sox, because they were in the throes of a hitting slump, they had been outplayed during the series. Ted Williams was virtually handcuffed



and the team was made up of young stars, most of whom had never been in a World Series before. They went into the final game favorites to win the baseball championship of the world.

There were two reasons for this. One was that Manager Joe Cronin had his twenty-five game winning sophomore ace, Dave Ferriss, ready to start on the mound. The other was that Manager Eddie Dyer had to depend on a little right-hander, Murry Dickson—as Brecheen, having pitched the entire sixth game, would not be available.

The Red Sox were poison to right-hand pitchers. Dyer hesitated about starting Dickson, but he had no choice. George Munger, the one right-hander who had beaten the Red Sox, had not had enough rest. Howie Pollet, Dyer's best southpaw during the regular season, had a back strain and would not be able to pitch. Brecheen was obviously out of the series, because it would not last long enough to give him sufficient rest. Dickson was all that Dyer had left.

Dickson did well. The Cardinals did not find Ferriss the puzzle who had given them four scattered hits in the third game of the series, which the Red Sox had won. Going into the Boston half of the eighth inning, the St. Louis club was leading, 3-1, and the packed home town crowd was cheer-

ing Dickson's every pitch, for, to all intents and purposes, every pitch the little right-hander threw was one pitch nearer to another championship for the Cardinals.

And then, suddenly, Dickson tired. Rip Russell, the first Red Sox batter in the eighth, pinch-hitting for Hal Wagner, singled. Then George Metkovich, batting for Earl Johnson, the Sox' relief pitcher, hit a double down the third base line. The stage was set for the Red Sox to tie up the ball game, perhaps win it. There were no outs, Russell was on third, Metkovich on second, and the top of the Red Sox batting order was coming up.

Dickson was through for the day. Dyer came out, talked to him a moment, and then sent him to the showers. The Cardinals' manager turned and signalled to the bull pen. Thirty-four thousand pairs of eyes followed his signal—and there, warming up frantically, was a little figure, sweeping the ball into the hands of his catcher, Del Rice—and sweeping it in with his left arm.

The man they called the "Cat," the man who could not pitch with less than four days' rest, was getting ready to come into the tightest spot of his life less than two days after he had pitched, and won, a full nine-inning ball game. The man whom

Dyer had openly wished were twins was being made into twins. Brecheen was coming in to try to save the game and the series for the Cardinals.

He was ice cold, so cold that, when Dyer waved him in to replace Dickson, Brecheen paid no attention, but kept right on smacking the ball into Rice's big mitt. He was so cold that big Cal Hubbard, the third base umpire, had to walk out to the bull pen, in deep left field, to tell him to take the mound. Not until Hubbard insisted did Brecheen finally stop throwing the ball, and turn to keep his date with baseball immortality.

He began the long walk to the pitcher's box, his shoulders so hunched that his uniform scarcely seemed to fit him, his cap jammed so far down over his head that it seemed to cover his eyes, his feet scuffling slowly, almost painfully. Munger, warming up beside him, gave Brecheen a little pat as he went by, but the "Cat" did not look up. He kept his eyes down, as he made his way to the mound where the baseball world was waiting.

A hushed sigh greeted the little man from Oklahoma, so little that he always needs four days of rest between games, so little that the bated breath of over 34,000 people seemed to be the breath of compassion.

Calmly, he took his place, at last, on the rubber.

He threw half a dozen practice pitches into the mitt of Joe Garagiola, the Cardinals' catcher, then signalled that he was ready.

Russell danced off third and Metkovich, representing the tying run, took a long lead off second. Wally Moses, the Red Sox leadoff man, a left-handed batter, stood waiting at the plate. Brecheen, his shoulders still hunched, leaned forward and peered at Garagiola for the signal. Then he straightened up, and threw the ball.

A minute later, Moses frantically swung at a screw ball for the third strike. Brecheen plucked at his belt, hitched up his trousers, kicked up some dirt, then turned to face Johnny Pesky, the great young Boston shortstop, one of the most deadly money hitters in baseball.

The "Cat" was too much for Pesky, another left-handed hitter. The Red Sox star fled out to Enos Slaughter in short right field. Russell was still on third, Metkovich on second, but now there were two out. It looked as if Brecheen were going to get out of trouble.

But Dominic DiMaggio, a dangerous batter at all times, and a right-handed hitter, to boot, was now facing the game little Oklahoman. DiMaggio had not been hitting well in the series, but he was a hard man to get out of there in the pinches. The

tying runs were still on base, and DiMaggio refused to be denied this time. He slammed a double to left center field, and Russell and Metkovich came home, to make the score 3-3.

The next batter was Williams, the Williams whom the baseball world expected to break up the series, the Williams who had won many a ball game for the Red Sox during a season which had found them romping to the American League championship by an absurdly wide margin, but a Williams who had faltered so badly during the series that he was considered its goat. And the man who continually had made him look bad was Harry Brecheen.

Dyer stopped the game and walked out to the mound. Stan Musial, Red Schoendienst, Marty Marion and George Kurowski, the St. Louis infield, gathered around, and Brecheen seemed to disappear from sight in the little knot of teammates, as though they were there to protect him from a desperately snarling Red Sox murderers' row poised for the kill.

The group separated at last. Dyer, visibly worried, walked slowly back to the St. Louis dugout. The duel between the tired little overworked southpaw and baseball's greatest slugger was ready to begin. Williams, frustrated and

angry, was determined to break up the series in this, his last chance.

In two pitches, it was over. The Red Sox star, his bat stilled by 155 pounds of sheer courage, fled out to Slaughter. And, as Brecheen wearily turned and slowly made his way towards his own bench, the huge crowd sighed, and the word went around like chain lightning, "It's his game now."

Little Harry Brecheen stood to enter one of baseball's most exclusive portals—the tiny company of men who had won three games in one World Series. If the Cardinals could score in their half of the eighth and Brecheen could hold the Red Sox in check in the ninth, he would become one of the very few to accomplish the almost impossible trick, and the first left-hander in history to do it.

He was tired—desperately tired. It was doubtful if he could pitch one more inning, much less more than that. His team-mates knew it, and they were determined to score in their half of the eighth, so that Brecheen would only have to pitch once more to the deadly Red Sox.

How they did it will go down in baseball history as one of the great winning gambles of baseball, for Slaughter went all the way home from first base on a soft hit to center field by Harry Walker.

Slaughter defied all the odds when he rounded third without stopping as Pesky, taking a throw-in from Lee Culberson who had replaced an injured DiMaggio, in center field, hesitated for just a second, and then made a hurried, too-late throw to the plate.

That crazy chance which Slaughter took gave the Cardinals a 4-3 lead. Now, Brecheen was only three outs away from victory.

The little man they call the "Cat" went back to the mound as he had come in from the bull pen, leaning forward like an old man, his shoulders sagging, his slinking, almost furtive shuffle making him look for all the world like a man who was ashamed of himself for trying to perform an impossible task.

Facing him was the great Red Sox first baseman, the deadliest right-handed slugger on the team, Rudy York, who, with home runs, had given the Boston club two of its three victories in the series. As the big Indian from Georgia stood at the plate, the sigh of pity seemed to ripple through the crowd again.

The ripple seemed justified, for York lined a single to left field, and the desperate Cronin put Paul Campbell, a fast man, in to run for him. Up came Bobby Doerr, another heavy-hitting right-

hander, the only man on the team who had batted in the series with the effectiveness he had batted during the season. Doerr jammed another single to left, a hit which gave the Red Sox second baseman a .409 average for the series. Now there were two men on base, and no one was out, with Mike Higgins at bat.

A hush came over the crowd. There was not a sound in the ball park as Dyer stopped the game again, and went out to the mound. Out in the left field bull pen, Munger was warming up and so, too, was Pollet, ailing back and all. In the Red Sox bull pen in right, big Tex Hughson was whipping the ball into the big mitt of Eddie McGah against the moment when he might have to go in to hold the Cardinals in case the Red Sox tied the game up, or went into the lead.

The group at the pitcher's box surrounded Brecheen again, and again it seemed as though his mates were protecting him. Not until Plate Umpire Al Barlick stepped down the lane towards the mound did the conference break up.

Dyer patted Brecheen on the back and then, without a sign towards his bull pen, turned and walked rapidly to his own dugout.

The "Cat" took a pull at his trousers belt, leaned well forward, and then, with new confi-



dence, began to work on Higgins. No longer cold, he was red hot now. His screw ball was dipping crazily and his curve was breaking sharply and his control was letter perfect.

He made Higgins ground to Kurowski, who threw to Marion at second, forcing Doerr. But Campbell was on third now and Higgins was on first with only one out, and Roy Partee, another dangerous right-hand hitter, was up.

Brecheen and destiny were ready to meet. The "Cat," his amazing new-found strength coming from some hidden well of reserve, was master now. He made Partee foul out to Musial at first base, and that left him one out away from victory. Tom McBride was sent in to pinch-hit for Bob Klinger, and he was also easy for the little miracle man from the Ozarks. Swiftly, Brecheen made McBride ground to Schoendienst at second, who tossed to Marion to force Higgins and end the game and win the series.

The same Cardinal infield which had gathered protectively around Brecheen in his moments of stress now happily rushed to him and carried him triumphantly off the field. The man they call the "Cat" had become the first man in twenty-eight years to win three games in one World Series.

Who was this little, sad-faced man with the

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queer nickname, the frail build and the heart of a lion? What made him tick? What was the background of this calm tamer of the heaviest-hitting team in baseball?

Harry David Brecheen was born on October 14, 1915, in a little town in Oklahoma with the lyrical name of Broken Bow, a town which his Texas born father had helped to plan and lay out. Two years later, he was taken to Ada, and has lived there ever since.

He went through school with the former Vera Caperton, and, in 1933, when Harry was eighteen and Vera was seventeen, the couple left high school and quietly went off and were married. Harry got a job as a night watchman so he could play ball in the daytime. He wanted to be a big league pitcher, in spite of a build so slender that practical baseball men said he would never make the grade because he was too small.

For two years he played semi-professional ball, and, although he was very wild, he did well enough to earn a tryout with the Greenville club in the East Dixie League in 1935, which is about as deep in the minor leagues as it is possible to go. He got the job largely on his record in American Legion junior baseball, in which he piled up the

astounding record of sixty-five victories in sixty-seven starts.

At the time, both Cardinal and New York Yankee scouts showed a bit of interest in him, but, because of his size, they were both hesitant in signing him. So, when the Greenville offer came, he accepted it, and, before the 1935 season was over, he was pitching for Galveston in the Texas League.

For the next two years, the "Cat" remained deep in the minors. While his wife Vera faithfully followed him about the tall grass of the leagues of lowest classification, she learned how to detect his faults, and, to this day, she goes over every game with him. She takes notes as he pitches, tells him what kind of balls opposing batters hit, and what kind seemed to fool them. She did it right up to, and including the 1946 World Series.

Brecheen's first big break was given him by, strangely enough, Eddie Dyer. Star and manager are friends of long standing. The relationship between the two dates back to the 1938 season.

At that time, Dyer was managing the Houston club in the Texas League, a St. Louis farm club. Houston had an outfielder named Hal Maggert who, at the end of the 1937 season, was drafted by

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the Boston Braves for \$6000. Dyer asked his boss, Branch Rickey, then general manager of the Cardinals and director of their farm system what to do with the money, and Rickey told him to draft two ball players from the Piedmont League.

One of the two whom Dyer picked was Clem Dreisewerd, who, as a relief pitcher for the Red Sox, met his old benefactor as a rival in the World Series. The other was Brecheen, who, at Portsmouth in the Piedmont loop, had won twenty-one games and lost only six during the 1937 season.

Dyer never regretted the decision. Brecheen stayed with Houston in both 1938 and 1939, and Houston, under Dyer, won the pennant both years, largely because, in a close race, Brecheen smashed all Texas League records by finishing the season with four straight shutouts and pitched 38 scoreless innings in succession. The record still stands.

The two pennants earned both Dyer and the "Cat" promotions. Dyer went to Columbus in the American Association, while Brecheen went up to the Cardinals. It was not very long, however, before the two were together again, for Brecheen was still green and the Cardinals sent him back to his old boss. The two teamed up at Columbus for an-

other pennant, and, two years later, Brecheen was back in St. Louis, this time permanently.

Not until 1946 did they meet again. Dyer, who has a successful oil business in Texas, retired temporarily from the game. But, when the Boston Braves hired Manager Billy Southworth away from the Cardinals, President Sam Breadon of the St. Louis club offered Dyer an opportunity to get back into baseball, this time as a big league manager.

The first to greet him in the training camp at St. Petersburg, Florida, was Brecheen. Harry knew the National League well. Dyer had yet to be formally introduced to it. There is no doubt that Brecheen helped Dyer in the early weeks of the 1946 pennant race as much as Dyer helped Brecheen.

The "Cat," however, had trouble. He had a sore left arm which had kept him out of action for a solid month of the 1945 season. The arm bothered him so much in the early months of the 1946 campaign that he could not get going. His 1946 record of fifteen games won and fifteen games lost was the result. He lost most of those fifteen games during the first few months of the season. When, finally, his arm rounded back into shape, Brecheen

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was practically invincible, as the Red Sox, to their horror, found out when the World Series rolled around.

The remarkable World Series performance turned in by Brecheen was preceded by one almost as amazing. The Cardinals did not win the 1946 pennant easily. They faltered so badly in the stretch that, on the final day of the season, they backed into the first tie for the pennant in baseball history when they lost to the Chicago Cubs while the Brooklyn Dodgers were being shut out by the Boston Braves. It necessitated the first play-off in all the history of baseball.

The Cardinals won the first game in St. Louis, and the two teams travelled to Brooklyn to play the second game, and, if necessary, the third. Dyer named Dickson as his starting pitcher, and, as in the final game of the World Series, Dickson did well, only this time, he went all the way to the ninth inning before he suddenly lost everything he had. Up to then, he had pitched a magnificent two-hit game against the Dodgers in their own bailiwick at Ebbets Field before a wildly partisan Brooklyn crowd.

Going into the ninth, the score was 8-1 in favor of St. Louis, and, to all intents and purposes, the series was over. But Dickson failed completely to

hold back the Dodgers in the ninth. Almost before Dyer realized it, the Dodgers scored two runs and had men on first and third, with Bruce Edwards, their great rookie catcher, coming up.

The Cardinals' manager called on Brecheen to put out the fire, just as he did later in the World Series. As on that occasion, the "Cat," who had had little chance to warm up, went into the game ice cold. Edwards singled off him to score another run and shave the lead to 8-4. When Brecheen walked pinch-hitter Cookie Lavagetto, the bases were filled, and the ever-dangerous Ed Stanky, the leadoff man, was up, representing the tying run.

Here, Brecheen responded with one of the greatest examples of clutch pitching in baseball history. He took his time, hunched forward for the signal, reared back and began throwing strikes. He got Stanky down to three balls and two strikes, and then slipped a fast one past the Dodger star when he was expecting a screw ball for the third strike.

In sheer desperation, Manager Leo Durocher of the Dodgers sent the lanky Howie Schultz, a right-handed hitter, to bat for Dick Whitman, who swings from the left side of the plate. Schultz, normally a weak hitter, had slammed a home run into the left field bleachers off Howie Pollet in the first game of the play-offs at St. Louis.

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But the tall Brooklyn boy was easy for the "Cat," who was all warmed up by now. With the pennant riding on every pitch, Brecheen threw two strikes, then a ball, then, while Schultz stood waiting for something he could hit, the "Cat" called on his reliable screw ball and Schultz missed it by four inches for the third strike.

So Harry Brecheen not only clinched the world's championship for Eddie Dyer and his team, but he clinched the pennant as well.

Brecheen has two ardent hobbies—he loves to hunt and fish. His wife has the same hobbies, and the two go off on long trips together in the off season. They have no children, and, like most childless couples, are deeply devoted to each other. Mrs. Brecheen went to Brooklyn for the second game of the play-off, and also made the trip to Boston for the third, fourth and fifth games of the World Series, although, strangely enough, Brecheen did not work in any of the three games in the Hub.

As soon as the World Series was over, the Brecheens left St. Louis and proceeded directly to their home town of Ada. There, Harry was given one of the wildest receptions in that community's history. Besides being given the key to the city,



Brecheen received all manner of presents, most of them gifts which he could use for hunting.

The two presents which meant the most to him were an aluminum boat for fishing and a camping trailer, on which was a drawing of a cat and the legend, "Harry the Cat, Ada, Oklahoma." Immediately after the reception, Brecheen and his wife packed up and went on their annual camping trip.

They probably will commute between St. Louis and Ada for a long time to come. The Cardinals are always ready to make deals, if they think they can benefit from them. But before they ever sell or trade Brecheen, they will have to get Dyer's approval, and the St. Louis manager would never stand for seeing his favorite "feline" go to another team.

Besides, Brecheen is Dyer's good luck charm. Eddie has won four pennants and a World Series with him.

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### HARRY DAVID BRECHEEN

Born, Oct. 14, 1915, Broken Bow, Okla.

Ht., 5' 10". Wt., 158 pounds. Throws left. Bats left.

Nationality—Irish-Dutch.

Married Vera Caperton, Sept. 10, 1933.

Hobbies—Hunting and fishing.

| Year | Club         | League   | G  | IP  | W  | L  | P.C. | H   | R   | SO  | BB  |
|------|--------------|----------|----|-----|----|----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1935 | Greenville   | E. Dixie | 12 | 63  | 5  | 4  | .556 | 61  | 42  | 39  | 24  |
| 1935 | Galveston    | Texas    | 10 | 24  | 0  | 3  | .000 | 29  | 17  | 8   | 17  |
| 1936 | Galveston    | Texas    | 7  | 37  | 0  | 4  | .000 | 37  | 13  | 13  | 14  |
| 1936 | Bartlesville | W.A.     | 38 | 239 | 6  | 18 | .250 | 257 | 183 | 196 | 118 |
| 1937 | Portsmouth   | Piedmont | 39 | 249 | 21 | 6  | .778 | 230 | 112 | 185 | 69  |
| 1938 | Houston      | Texas    | 43 | 212 | 13 | 10 | .565 | 196 | 93  | 121 | 87  |
| 1939 | Houston      | Texas    | 42 | 251 | 18 | 7  | .720 | 216 | 88  | 146 | 87  |
| 1940 | St. Louis    | National | 3  | 3   | 0  | 0  | .000 | 2   | 0   | 4   | 2   |
| 1940 | Columbus     | A.A.     | 34 | 216 | 16 | 9  | .640 | 207 | 90  | 124 | 52  |
| 1941 | Columbus     | A.A.     | 35 | 188 | 16 | 6  | .727 | 175 | 95  | 112 | 66  |
| 1942 | Columbus     | A.A.     | 33 | 246 | 19 | 10 | .655 | 211 | 66  | 156 | 53  |
| 1943 | St. Louis    | National | 29 | 135 | 9  | 6  | .600 | 98  | 41  | 68  | 39  |
| 1944 | St. Louis    | National | 30 | 189 | 16 | 5  | .762 | 174 | 67  | 88  | 46  |
| 1945 | St. Louis    | National | 24 | 157 | 15 | 4  | .789 | 136 | 48  | 63  | 44  |
| 1946 | St. Louis    | National | 35 | 231 | 15 | 15 | .500 | 208 | 75  | 121 | 66  |

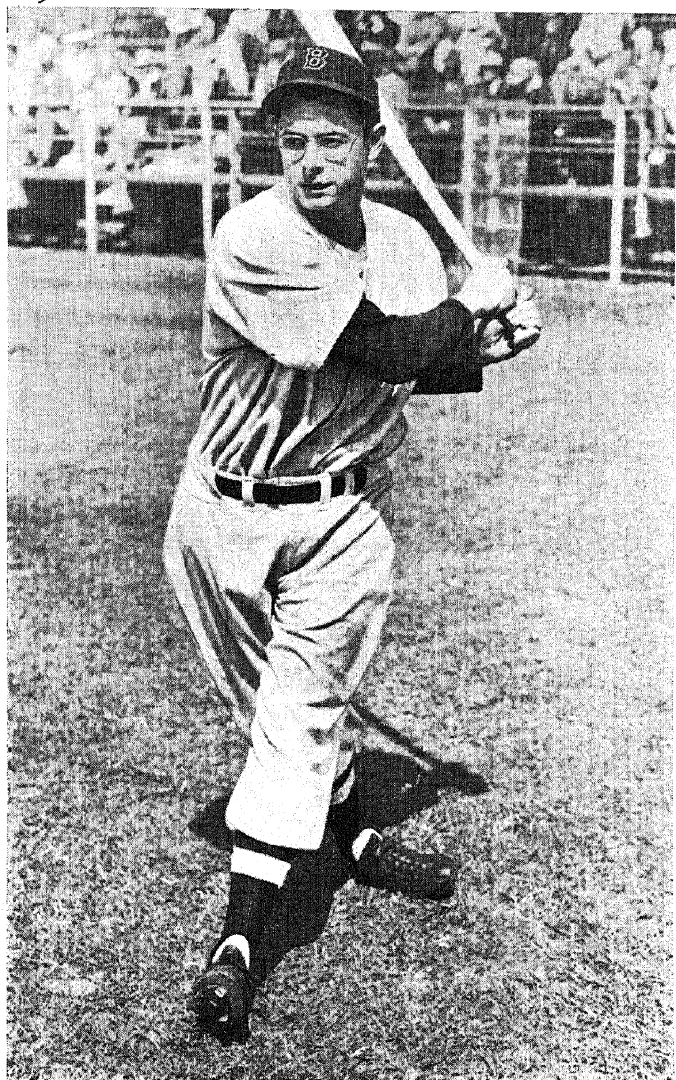
### WORLD SERIES RECORDS

|      |           |          |   |                 |   |   |       |    |   |    |   |
|------|-----------|----------|---|-----------------|---|---|-------|----|---|----|---|
| 1943 | St. Louis | National | 3 | 3 $\frac{2}{3}$ | 0 | 1 | .000  | 5  | 1 | 3  | 3 |
| 1944 | St. Louis | National | 1 | 9               | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | 9  | 1 | 4  | 4 |
| 1946 | St. Louis | National | 3 | 20              | 3 | 0 | 1.000 | 14 | 1 | 11 | 4 |

DOMINIC DIMAGGIO

*“The Little Professor”*





DOMINIC (DOM) DIMAGGIO



## CHAPTER III

DOMINIC DIMAGGIO  
"THE LITTLE PROFESSOR"

THE Red Sox were a sad looking lot of ball players. The Cardinals had just beaten them for the championship in the final game of the big series, and the Boston warriors walked across the diamond at Sportsman's Park with heads hanging and hearts heavy. They fought their way through a crowd in front of the players' exit through the home team dugout, and the jubilant St. Louisans added to their misery with taunting remarks. It was then a strange thing happened. One of the Red Sox players, sad as any of the rest, looked up for a second and smiled. His shoulders stiffened out of their slump, and for a brief moment the strain of defeat was forgotten for Dom DiMaggio. At just that moment he heard one of the crowd say to a companion:

"That's Dom. Joe DiMaggio's his brother."

A long six years before, the Boston baseball writers had honored the youngest DiMaggio as

their rookie hero of the year 1940. He was the honor guest at the annual mid-winter banquet and among the tributes paid him was one in song, a parody sung to the tune of "Maryland, My Maryland," whose punch line went something like this:

"Who can run and bat and throw?  
Who's better than his brother Joe?  
Dominic DiMaggio!"

The Boston writers and their fellow songbirds were a little premature in this last line of their song. Little Dom had just finished his first season with the Boston Red Sox and while he had astounded the entire baseball world by hitting for .301 and had proved that he wasn't merely riding along the major league base paths on Joe's coat tails, he had come a long way from making the fans forget about Joe in that one year. Joe had, himself, hit for .352 that season and during 1941 and 1942 he continued to demonstrate that he was the number one ball player in the DiMaggio family. When the two brothers put aside their baseball bats and went away to war, Little Dom was still Joe DiMaggio's brother. \*

To the little fellow with the curly hair and the



glasses, it had always been so. When Dom was born on February 12, 1918, Joe was then three years old and there was also brother Vince, who was little more than two years older than Joe. The DiMaggios were a fishing family, one of the many who lived in the North Beach section of San Francisco in the neighborhood of the world-famed Fishermen's Wharf. The DiMaggios were also a baseball playing family—in this new generation—and every free moment found Vince and Joe out playing ball and kid brother Dom looking on.

As the years passed and the boys grew with them, Dom took his place in the neighborhood games and the three brothers there began the careers that were to transport all three of them to the luxurious life of the major leagues—there on the dirt and pebble playgrounds of North Beach. There they learned to judge fly balls and to romp after them in a style they could have had patented. There, too, they played their only baseball as part of one outfield, for in later years their one appearance in a charity game convinced them that the outfield was not big enough for three DiMaggios. They kept running into one another each time a fly ball was hit to the outfield, and they have never played three on a side since. An ex-major leaguer, an old-timer with a keen sense of loyalty

to the great outfielders of the past, once sat through a Red Sox-Yankees game at Fenway Park and said, "Isn't it a strange thing? Of all the years baseball has been played, the three greatest defensive outfielders have come from one family in one generation. If I had my choice of the three best outfielders of all time to play on one team, I'd pick Vince, Joe and Dom DiMaggio!"

Yet few around the old North Beach ball park ever thought little Dom would be a ball player. While Joe and Vince were tall and rangy with strong forearms and inborn speed, Dom was short and almost puny. He wore glasses, too, which, in itself, seemed a certain detriment to his baseball career. Everyone in the neighborhood—with the lone exception of Dom, himself—figured that he, like his brothers, Tom and Mike, would become a fisherman.

The DiMaggio dynasty began with Vince in the year 1932, when he signed his first contract to play professional baseball with the San Francisco Seals. Joe also signed the same year. But at the time the kid brother was studying very hard at Galileo High School.

It was not until two seasons later, with Joe still with the Seals and Vince now with Hollywood having the DiMaggio reputation firmly estab-

lished in the Pacific Coast League, that Dom broke into any baseball lineup at all. As a senior at Galileo he tried out for the team, and despite his suffering the pangs of being called again and again Joe DiMaggio's brother, he made the ball club and played shortstop and pitched. The team reached the finals of the city school championship that season, and Dom batted for the high average of .400. But all the season long he batted in the ninth slot in the batting order, because there was still the supposition bordering on superstition that a guy with glasses just can not be expected to hit.

During the season of 1935 Dom would often accompany Joe out to the Seals' stadium to work out with the team. Nobody paid any attention to the kid at the time, but Joe would spend many minutes of his spare time showing him the right way to play center field and Dom would listen with scholarly interest. He hadn't missed many Seals' games since first Vince and then Joe had patrolled center field for them, and his brothers were at all times his heroes, except, of course, when they gave him the kid brother treatment. Dom knew in his heart that he wanted to follow in their spike marks. A fisherman's career was a very poor second choice. Then, in 1936, a strange thing happened to San Francisco. Joe was taken up to the

New York Yankees of the American League and for the first time in four seasons there wasn't a DiMaggio in center field for the Seals.

The situation existed for just one year.

In the spring of 1937 the Seals ran a sandlot school in San Francisco. Dom at the time was working at a mattress factory in the city, but he decided that he would attend the school and find out definitely if there was another ball player among the DiMaggios. He asked his boss for the time off to attend the school, and added that he hoped his job would be waiting for him if he didn't make good. "It'll be waiting all right," said the boss. "But you'll never be back to fill it."

The boss was right.

The school was held at the Seals' stadium, familiar territory to Dom. Manager Lefty O'Doul of the Seals was the schoolmaster, and half the population of San Francisco seemed in attendance. Dom busied himself as best he could among the mob, and when finally O'Doul got to the point of asking his name, he countered with the usual statement, "I'm Joe DiMaggio's brother." O'Doul watched him very closely; recognized the familiar pattern of his defensive play, smiled at the way the little fellow stood up there at the plate and took his cut at the ball, and secretly rubbed his hands

at the prospects of the youngster. On opening day that season, there was a DiMaggio in center field for the Seals. Joe was making good with the Yankees. Vince had been moved up to the Boston Braves. This was Dom.

The fans and the experts did not jump immediately upon the newest DiMaggio rooters' wagon. The experts began to write that here was a guy getting by on the reputation of his brothers before him, but their insinuations only made Dom the more determined to make good and O'Doul's teachings gave him the necessary tools to make good. But the experts insisted that he was not the keen, rock-like athlete that Joe had been. They pointed out that he was frail, and wore glasses, and they nicknamed him "The Little Professor."

"The Little Professor" he has remained to this day, and although he claims that he is not fond of the nickname he cherishes several personal possessions, many the gifts of fans, with that inscription on them. But "The Little Professor" seemed a derogatory term at the time the little gamester of the DiMaggio family was fighting to break into baseball. He was hounded during the first weeks of that 1937 season by remarks, both verbal and printed, that said he was just getting by on the reputation his brothers had built before him.

"Look at him," snarled the critics. "He doesn't even look like a ball player. Who ever heard of a guy with glasses being able to hit?"

But in his first season as a regular with the Seals, Dom hit for .306, belted out five home runs and drove in 46 runs, as well as proving himself, at the least, equal to his brothers before him at the defensive side of the game.

Everyone admitted that here indeed was another DiMaggio worthy of the name.

The years passed quickly for Dom. His entire diamond apprenticeship was spent with the Seals—three seasons of it. In his second year playing for Lefty O'Doul and the sons of San Francisco, he batted for .307, a gain of one whole point, he now says with a smile, over his debut season. In 1939, he hit for .360. He smashed out fourteen home runs. He drove in eighty-two runs. And he was voted the most valuable player in the Pacific Coast League. The hard work of DiMaggio and O'Doul, pupil and teacher, had paid off. Little Dom was known up and down the Pacific Coast as a fielder every bit as good as Joe. Some said, with fists ready to defend their words, that he possessed a better throwing arm than Joe. At the bat it was still the same old story, however. Joe was burning up the American League with his worthy willow, .360

average or not, Little Dom, in this department, was still Joe DiMaggio's kid brother.

Following that successful semester of 1939, the Boston Red Sox, still seeking the pennant at the bottom of any rainbow, gave the Seals \$75,000 and a left handed pitcher, Larry Powell, as a fair purchase price for Dom DiMaggio.

It did not take the youngest DiMaggio long to discover that here again he must undergo the same storm of belittling that marked his first days with the Seals. Once again, the fans in the major league cities said he was getting by on Joe's reputation (Vince had bowed out of the picture as a great star by this time; he was still puttering around the major leagues, but he was typed by everyone as a marvelous fielder, a mule of a hitter) and they took up the cry that had resounded throughout San Francisco those three years previous that such a little guy with such poor eyesight would never be able to hit major league pitching.

Dom had joined the Red Sox at their training camp in Sarasota, and there he experienced his first major league disappointment. Center field was his bailiwick. But the Red Sox had the capable Doc Cramer as their center fielder, and Manager Joe Cronin moved the DiMaggio lad into right field in the regular lineup. He started the

season in right, remained in that spot until a tougher break hit him in the fourth game of the regular championship schedule. He sprained an ankle. The injury kept him confined to the dug-out for nearly three months. He returned to right field in July, but in August Joe Cronin decided that DiMaggio was to be his regular center fielder.

No matter what position he played, Dom just kept shuffling and hustling along, and when the season's totals were complete, those who had accused him of paddling his canoe with his brother's reputation choked something more than a little bit on his .301 batting average. The Boston baseball writers quickly decided that here, truly, was their prize rookie of this year—of any year, perhaps. They sent for Dom to come to their mid-winter banquet, and the Little Professor flew all the way across the continent from San Francisco to attend and receive a trophy from the writers, which told in bronze the fact that the major leagues had quickly conceded that Joe wasn't the only DiMaggio in the baseball world. The baseball writers went just a little too far that night, however. That was when they asked in song, "Who's better than his brother Joe?" and answered just as much out of key, "Dominic DiMaggio!"

Joe had batted fifty-one points higher than Dom



that first season of 1940. Dom captured Boston's baseball hearts completely in 1941 with his spectacular play afield and he hit that season for a capable .283. But that same season, Joe hit for .357 and was voted for a second time the most valuable player in the American League. In 1942, Dom batted for .286, and though Joe slumped to a mere .305, he held the supremacy of the DiMaggio family over the kid brother as a chapter in the lives of the DiMaggios—and all the rest of the people, big and little alike, in the world—came to a shocking end.

The war was on throughout that 1942 season, and baseball had suddenly become a trivial thing indeed. At the close of the season, both DiMaggios hastened into the armed services. Joe joined the army. Dom enlisted in the navy. The little guy had to battle to pass the navy eye test, but he did and was awarded the third class petty officer's rating of coxswain. He served first at Treasure Island in his native San Francisco, but before the atomic bomb and the final curtain were dropped on the war, he saw service in Australia, the Philippines and at Pearl Harbor doing welfare and recreation work. He was discharged in the winter of 1945 with the rating of chief petty officer.

The war was over, baseball suddenly became im-

portant again, and both DiMaggios returned to their former stations in center field for the Yankees and the pennant-bound Red Sox. At the start of the 1946 season, they were still calling Dom "Joe's kid brother" and there was little hope for that situation to change during the first postwar year.

There were stories that while he was in the navy, Dom's eyesight had become worse. At one time he did actually lose the sight of one eye due to an inflammation the medical men called retinitis. It seemed impossible for Dom to return and make good in the major leagues, let alone for him to assume the role of the greatest of the DiMaggios.

As the season progressed, fans sat up and began to take notice. Little Dom's eyes were following the ball better than ever before. Hits began to roll off his bat in a manner that testified to his complete readjustment to the civilian way of life. The Red Sox marched step by step, game by game, victory by victory, toward their first pennant since the year 1918, and keeping pace with them in a march to a personal title of his own was "The Little Professor," quietly going about the business of hitting for .317, the highest average of his major league career.

On the other hand, Joe did not fall as rapidly back into his former way of life, when he shifted from his role as a Yank in the American Army to a Yankee in the American League. Joe just couldn't seem to get going throughout 1946. The Yankees foundered along, and fans kept saying, "Wait until Joe DiMaggio starts hitting." But they were still saying it when the season ended. His final average was .290, twenty-seven points less than Dom's.

A few die-hard fans will point out even today that Joe still leads the DiMaggios in color. Both Joe and Dom are definitely the quiet types, species of the human clam, but these fans will point out that at least Joe provides the sports writers with material for human interest stories when the ball game is rained out, while Boston Boswells were forced to create a phoney rumor about a romance for Dom to find anything to write about him at all.

The youngest DiMaggio does have a few outside interests beyond the territory bounded by left and right fields, and the immediate confines of the batter's box. He has developed strong business interests in his restaurants in San Francisco. He likes to listen to the radio, and the newspapers completely satiate his literary thirsts. An occasional friendly card game provides more relaxation than

winnings, when the team is travelling on the road. And beyond that silent Dom says little and lets his bat do his talking for him.

So Joe, perhaps, still gets the lion's share of the stories the fame of the family demands. But that is largely because his base of operations is New York City, the centerpiece of publicity, and largely too because it was not until late in the 1946 season that the two-column authors discovered the vast wealth of material hidden behind the almost wordless friendliness of the kid brother.

At any rate, Dom cares but little about Joe's advantage in the sports pages, for he achieved the goal of his life when he led him in the batting average columns following a battle begun when he signed with the Seals those nine years before. More than brothers, Joe and Dom are good friends. When they meet, along with the Red Sox and the Yankees, the two retain their silent natures and say but little, but there is an evident cordiality between them. At least once in each series the teams play, either in Boston or New York, the two will have dinner together to talk about home and their parents, their restaurants, and the public and personal fortunes of one another. On the field, they sometimes trade side remarks as they trade positions in center field, but

Joe abandoned all thoughts of giving the kid brother advice at an early stage of their dual big league careers.

The first time the two played against each other in Yankee Stadium, Joe warned Dom as they passed between innings that he was playing too shallow in such a big outfield. "Thanks," enthused Dom, and next inning he moved back—just in time to bring down a terrifically long fly ball off the bat of, you guessed it, Joe DiMaggio.

Nor does Little Dom need advice from brother Joe, or from anyone now. He is unanimously recognized as Joe's equal afield. His throwing arm is challenged in bullet-like speed and accuracy only by Joe's. And in the season of 1946, he led Joe at the plate and rightfully assumed the title as monarch of the DiMaggios. The kid brother had made good.

Dom went on after the regular season was ended to win additional and greater honors in the World Series. Despite the fall of the mighty Red Sox before the underdog St. Louis Cardinals, the play of the Boston center fielder on defense and the booming song of his bat on offense shone through the gloom of defeat. No baseball fan will ever forget the Boston half of the eighth inning, when the first two Red Sox, both pinch hitters, hit

to put men on second and third. Harry "the Cat" Brecheen came in to pitch for the Cardinals, and he retired Wally Moses and Johnny Pesky. There were still men on second and third when up to the plate stepped "The Little Professor."

In San Francisco the DiMaggios gathered close to their radio. Vince DiMaggio thought back to the days when the little fellow with glasses, his kid brother, followed him around North Beach copying his every move on the ball field. Joe DiMaggio thought of the days when Dom, his kid brother, sought his advice after trailing along with him out to the Seals' stadium. The DiMaggios crossed their fingers, and Joe whispered, "C'mon, Min," using Dom's nickname of their boyhood days.

Dom worked the count to three balls and one strike, and then Brecheen threw him the one he was waiting for. Dom's big bat, the DiMaggio family's biggest bat, swung around and the ball set sail for right field. It hit the fence in front of the bleachers at Sportsman's Park, and by the time it was retrieved two tying runs had crossed the plate for Boston and Dom was on second with a double. He had pulled a leg muscle rounding first base, however, and was forced to retire from the game but the runner who took his place could have scored the winning run for the Red Sox had

not the victory been in the cards for the Cardinals that day.

In the joy of St. Louis' triumph and the woe of Boston's defeat that day, the sports pages sang nonetheless of the personal glory of Dom DiMaggio. There were tributes on tributes paid him in print for his magnificence afield and his power at bat. The typewriters sang of Dom DiMaggio and the presses echoed their praise, but "The Little Professor" enjoyed one tribute more than all the others. As he walked off the field, as dejected as any of his beaten teammates, his face suddenly broke through its glumness with a smile and his shoulders straightened and his chest puffed, as he overheard the voice of an ordinary baseball fan of St. Louis say the words he'd been waiting all his baseball life to hear:

"That's Dom. Joe DiMaggio's his brother."

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### DOMINIC DIMAGGIO

Born San Francisco, Calif., February 12, 1918.

Bats right. Throws right. Height 5 feet 9 inches.

Weight 160 Pounds.

| Year             | Club                     | Lea. | Pos. | G   | AB  | R   | H   | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|------------------|--------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1937             | San Francisco            | PCL  | OF   | 140 | 496 | 109 | 152 | 5  | 46  | .306 |
| 1938             | San Francisco            | PCL  | OF   | 163 | 659 | 120 | 202 | 5  | 60  | .307 |
| 1939             | San Francisco            | PCL  | OF   | 170 | 664 | 165 | 239 | 14 | 82  | .360 |
| 1940             | Boston                   | AL   | OF   | 108 | 418 | 81  | 126 | 8  | 46  | .301 |
| 1941             | Boston                   | AL   | OF   | 144 | 584 | 117 | 165 | 8  | 58  | .283 |
| 1942             | Boston                   | AL   | OF   | 151 | 622 | 110 | 178 | 14 | 48  | .286 |
| 1943, 1944, 1945 | —(In United States Navy) |      |      |     |     |     |     |    |     |      |
| 1946             | Boston                   | AL   | OF   | 142 | 534 | 85  | 169 | 7  | 73  | .317 |

### WORLD SERIES RECORD

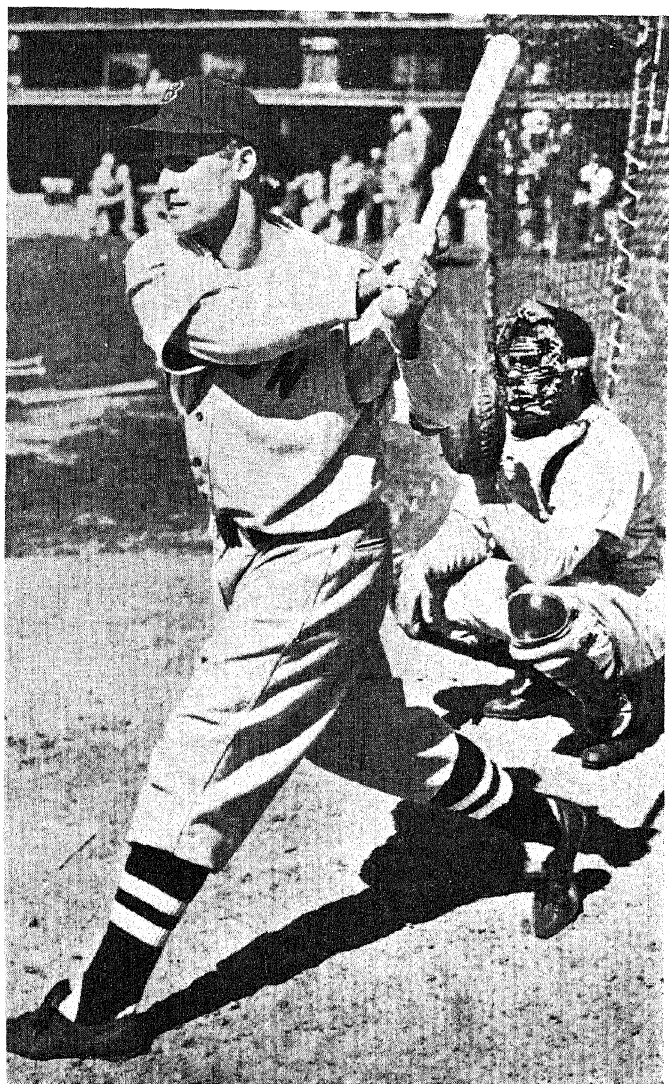
|      |        |    |    |   |    |   |   |   |   |      |
|------|--------|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1946 | Boston | AL | OF | 7 | 27 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 3 | .259 |
|------|--------|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|



ROBERT PERSHING DOERR

*“The Illahe Flash”*





ROBERT PERSHING (BOBBY) DOERR



## CHAPTER IV

ROBERT PERSHING DOERR  
"THE ILLAHE FLASH"

THE Los Angeles area is one of the great incubators for major league ball players. It has produced scores of stars, who, because the weather is perfect for the great American pastime, can and do play it from January through December. Boys from Southern California are born with gloves in their hands and bats over their shoulders. Some of them discard both before they reach maturity. Those who do not often go into professional baseball and many of these find their brilliant ways into the majors.

Along Figueroa Street, the long boulevard which leads east and west out of the growing California metropolis, on the way to Long Beach, there are baseball diamonds on nearly every corner. On one of them, Robert Pershing Doerr of the Boston Red Sox, generally acknowledged to be the greatest second basemen of the game today and rapidly nearing the immortality of being one of the great-

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est of all time, first began to play sandlot baseball.

His team-mates and opponents included a host of other stars. Three of them, George (Catfish) Metkovich, Roy Partee and Glen (Rip) Russell, are still team-mates of Doerr's. Metkovich played a good part of the 1946 season in right field for the greatest Red Sox team since the first World War, Partee split the catching assignment with Hal Wagner and Russell played a great deal of third base for the men whom Manager Joe Cronin led to Boston's first American League pennant since 1918.

There were others whom Doerr knew and with whom he played ball as a youngster. Gerry Priddy of the Washington Senators, Al Zarilla, Vernon Stephens and Johnny Berardino of the St. Louis Browns were among them, and many others who are now in minor league ball were 'teen-age friends and rivals of Doerr's.

The Red Sox star, although, born on April 7, 1918, and only twenty-eight in 1946, was the oldest active player in point of service on the Red Sox club during their first championship year in nearly three decades. That was his tenth year with the team, and he celebrated his nineteenth birthday on his way north from spring training with the club the year he first donned major league regalia.

He has been the team's regular second baseman from that day to this. The only big league owner he has ever worked for is Thomas A. Yawkey. The only big league manager he has ever been responsible to is Joseph E. Cronin. The only big league home he has ever had is Boston's Fenway Park.

His baseball career in Boston has run parallel to all the hopes and letdowns which, for years, made the Boston Red Sox the most disappointing team in baseball. His team-mates, down through the years, were high-powered expensive stars of the type of Jimmie Foxx, Robert Moses (Lefty) Grove, Wes Ferrell, Cronin himself, who cost Yawkey a quarter of a million dollars in cash and players, and others—men for whom Yawkey spent millions in a vain attempt to buy a pennant.

Doerr was the first of Yawkey's bargain-basement kids, about whom he wove baseball's 1946 team of destiny—kids like the great Ted Williams, Dominic DiMaggio, Johnny Pesky, Maurice (Mickey) Harris, Dave Ferriss, Cecil (Tex) Hughson, Earl Johnson, Emil Dreisewerd, George (Catfish) Metkovich, Roy Partee, Leon Culberson and the others who have made the Red Sox what they are today.

Doerr was brought up on baseball. His father, Harold Doerr, loved the game and played it as a

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youth. His older brother, Hal, was a professional ball player for several years. It was Hal who persuaded the old Hollywood team in the Pacific Coast League to give Bobby a trial back in 1934, as Hal was with the team himself then. The youngster outshone his brother and outshone every other baseball player in the country at his chosen position.

The Hollywood franchise, in those days, had been kicked around. Originally, it was the Salt Lake City team in the Coast League, but Salt Lake could not support a class AAA team. It was moved into Wrigley Field in Los Angeles and labelled "Hollywood," although the team never played in the movie capital. The league schedules were so arranged that the Hollywood and Los Angeles clubs never played at home at the same time, so, when the Angels were away, the Hollywood Stars rented their ball park and played in it.

The orphaned Stars could not make a go of it at Wrigley Field either and, in 1936, they moved again, this time to San Diego, where, as the Saints, they are still holding forth in the Pacific Coast League. The present Hollywood club in that league originally was the San Francisco Missions, moved south because San Francisco could not sup-



port them and the Seals, as well as the Oakland club across the bay.

It was at San Diego, in 1936, Doerr's last year as a minor leaguer, where General Manager Edward T. Collins of the Red Sox, who was making a scouting trip of his own throughout the country in a frantic attempt to gather together a pennant-winning club, first saw Doerr. It was at San Diego, too, where Collins first saw Williams, later to become perhaps the greatest slugger in the history of baseball.

Doerr saw Williams for the first time in 1936.

"I'll never forget it," Bobby recalls. "We weren't a slugging team. Most of us were line drive hitters and it wasn't very often that anyone ever slammed a ball out of the park. This big, gangling kid came around in July and asked if he could have a tryout. He stepped up there and slapped three over the fence, while we all stood there and gaped.

"I remember, too, my father making two predictions, both of which came true. My dad was out there that day. After a look at Williams, he said, 'He'll be with this club within a week.' Dad was right. But, when he added, 'Some day, he'll be greater than Joe DiMaggio, greater than Babe

Ruth, the greatest hitter of all time,' I replied, 'Dad, don't you think that's a pretty big order?' Well, I guess Dad was right on that one, too."

Collins knew a good second baseman when he saw one. He himself is in baseball's Hall of Fame, stamped for all time as one of the finest second sackers in all baseball history. The Red Sox had taken an option on Doerr, strictly from hearsay, and one of the reasons for Collins' long trip from Boston was to see the kid in action. One look was all Collins needed. He exercised the option in the fall of 1936, and Doerr reported to the Red Sox training camp at Sarasota, Florida, the following spring. Except for a stretch in the service during the last war, he has been reporting to Sarasota every year since, a better second baseman with each passing year.

Bobby was twelve years old when he first began to play sandlot ball around Los Angeles. Two years later, at fourteen, he was the second baseman for the Leonard Wood Post 125, American Legion team, one of the youngest players ever to make a regular position on a Legion nine. That was in 1932. One of his team-mates on that team was Arnold (Mickey) Owen, who electrified the baseball world when, after being honorably discharged from the navy in the spring of 1946, jumped to the

Mexican League instead of reporting to the Brooklyn Dodgers, whose property he was. Owen, as a member of the St. Louis Cardinals and later Brooklyn, was one of the better catchers in the majors, although he was a shortstop on the Legion team. Steve Mesner, later a Cincinnati Reds third baseman, was another team-mate of Doerr's on the Wood nine, and, so, too, was Hershey Lyons, who played in the outfield for a time with the Cardinals.

That 1932 American Legion team reached the semi-finals in the National American Legion championships, representing Los Angeles. It was beaten in Omaha that year by the New Orleans team, which later went on to play in the finals at Manchester, N. H. Had the Leonard Wood team won at Omaha, Doerr would have had an early look at Boston and Fenway Park.

Bobby played with the same Legion team in 1934, and, in both 1933 and 1934, he played for John C. Fremont High School in Los Angeles. Then, in the spring of 1934, just as he turned sixteen, Bobby, with the blessing of his father, signed a contract to play with Hollywood and he became a team-mate of his brother.

During the entire time when he was at Hollywood and San Diego, Doerr continued his studies,

going to high school during the winters and playing ball during the long Pacific Coast League seasons. In 1936, the year before he joined the Red Sox, he received his school diploma.

One of the more amazing things about Doerr's baseball career is his development as a slugger. Bobby was not brought to Boston for his hitting. The Red Sox had had trouble at second base. One after another, men were tried there and just did not have the necessary talent to satisfy the fussy Collins, who, as a former second baseman himself, realized the necessity for strength down "through the middle," behind the plate, at second and short and in center field. That is the strength the Red Sox have today, with Wagner and Partee catching, Doerr playing second, Pesky shortstop and DiMaggio center field.

Doerr was strictly a slick fielding second baseman, but his work at the plate was not expected to put sweet dreams of pennants into the minds of rabid, championship-starved Boston fans. During his three years with the Hollywood-San Diego club, Doerr topped the .300 mark twice, and, although his .342 figure in 1936 was far better than average, it was not the reason why he came to the Red Sox so soon. The truth was that Collins liked

his work in the infield and was only incidentally interested in his hitting.

What Collins also knew, however, and the Boston fans soon came to realize was that, even in those days, Doerr, despite good, but not terrific batting, was a great "clutch" hitter. He was at his most dangerous at the plate when there were men on bases. In 1935, his second year at Hollywood, he batted in seventy-four runs. During the following year, at San Diego, he pushed seventy-seven runs across the plate.

But he was not the power hitter which he later became. In three years on the Pacific Coast, Bobby hit only six home runs. In his first two years at Boston, in 1937, when he played in fifty-five games and, in 1938, when he was the team's ranking and regular second baseman, he only hit seven homers, although in 1938, he batted in eighty runs while failing to hit .300.

It was not until 1939, the year Ted Williams joined the club, that Doerr suddenly developed into one of the great power hitters of baseball, and, from that year on, he never failed to bat in at least seventy runs. Usually, he went well above that figure. Not only that, but Bobby also started to hit for the circuit. In 1939, he belted twelve

homers. A year later he hit twenty-two. Every year thereafter, he hit at least fifteen per season. In 1940 and 1942, he batted in over one hundred runs and, as the years unfolded and Doerr became more and more experienced, he ranked as one of the most valuable players in the game.

Doerr himself doesn't know what happened to a bat which had been used for sending line drives to all parts of the field for years and then suddenly woke up to hit and clear fences. He did not change his stance nor his style of batting, although he did lengthen his grip a trifle on the club. He thinks that it was probably the Williams influence and, like most American League ball players, he has benefited from watching the great Ted day in and day out.

Doerr bats right handed, and Fenway Park in Boston has a traditionally short left field fence, only 315 feet from the plate. When baseball experts point out that this chummy wall in left field is one reason why the Red Sox power hitters do so well at home, they refer, particularly, to Doerr. It is true that Bobby is one of the beneficiaries of that fence, but he hits as well away from home as he does in Boston.

While the whole team was slugging its way to a long lead in the early weeks of the 1946 campaign,

Doerr's bat was strangely silent. He had gone into the army in the late summer of 1944. He played no baseball during the 1945 season and he had trouble, when he returned from the service, at the start of the season. Boston fans failed to worry. Everyone else was hitting, and Bobby, they knew, would find his eye sooner or later.

He did. Just as most of the other members of the club went into an inevitable slump in May, Doerr began to hit at his normal pace. His slump, which had lasted for nearly the first third of the season, was behind him, and, when his batting was needed most, Doerr was there with the willow. He hit hard enough to literally drag himself up by the bootstraps from the lower confines of the .200 class to well over .300. He won game after game during a crucial period when even Williams was having trouble at the plate.

Then, when the others began to hit again, Bobby continued at his torrid pace, and that is one reason why the Red Sox won the flag which had eluded them for so many lean years. Doerr, Williams, Pesky and York, acquired by the Red Sox during the winter in a deal which sent Eddie Lake to Detroit, were high in all of the American League batting departments.

Doerr's fielding always has been great. He is

the smoothest-working second baseman in the game today. For many years, there was a question in the minds of baseball fans everywhere concerning the relative merits of Doerr and Joe Gordon of the New York Yankees. While Gotham fans swore by Gordon, Boston followers of the game insisted that he couldn't hold Doerr's glove.

The argument was settled once and for all in 1946, when Doerr, in his tenth year in the majors, was greater than ever, while Gordon, who went to the Yanks in 1938, the year after Doerr joined the Red Sox, gave every indication of being on his way out, and, in fact, was traded to Cleveland at the end of the season.

Doerr's greatness as a "money" ball player was proven beyond any doubt in the 1946 World Series, which the highly favored Red Sox lost to the St. Louis Cardinals in one of baseball's more startling upsets. The St. Louis club was given little chance to beat the Red Sox powerhouse in the Fall classic, and, in fact, the odds were nearly 3-1 on the Boston team before the series began.

No one will ever be able to explain what happened to the Red Sox in that series. The heavy bats which had slugged the team to an easy American League pennant, and which were supposed to crush the less-favored Cardinals in four straight



games or, at the most, four games out of five, were stilled by great Cardinal pitching. Wily Eddie Dyer, the Cardinals' freshman manager, out-smarted the Red Sox on more than one occasion, and his team played inspired baseball from start to finish.

The Red Sox did not deserve to win the series. They were over-confident; they had won the pennant by too wide a margin; they were a little contemptuous of the National League, which had lost a one-sided game to the American League in the All-Star game. Worst of all, the Red Sox had let down. They coasted to the pennant on September 13. The Cardinals could not win the National League pennant without playing an unprecedented play-off series with the Brooklyn Dodgers in October.

The result was that the Cardinals entered the World Series keyed up and accustomed to pressure. The Red Sox went into it lethargically, and they could not pull themselves out of that lethargy.

There were few bright spots in the Red Sox play, but one of them was the playing of Bobby Doerr. While most of his team-mates were far off their regular season form, Doerr played as he always did, smart, heads-up baseball, the money

game for which he is noted. He did not make an error in the field, in spite of the fact that he was playing with a group of mates who were jittery and nervous, guilty of errors of both commission and omission.

The steadiest man in the infield was Doerr. Outside of Wally Moses, who only played in four of the seven games, the heaviest Red Sox hitter in the series was Doerr, who batted .409 in six games. Outside of Moses and Harry Walker of the Cardinals, who batted .412 in seven games, Doerr was the hardest hitter in the entire series.

Only five home runs were hit in the entire series, two by Rudy York. The others were hit by Enos Slaughter of the Cardinals, Lee Culberson of the Red Sox and Doerr. His home run came in the fifth game of the series, which the Red Sox lost by a 12-3 score in Boston. It went over the chummy left field fence at Fenway Park, with one man on base, and accounted for two of the three Red Sox runs that day.

In spite of the home run, that was a black day for Doerr. In the ninth inning, as he stood at his second base position, he suffered a sudden migraine headache attack, which was so bad that he had to stop the game and ask for relief. The ailment was so bad that, when he walked into the clubhouse,

he could not recognize any of the half dozen newspapermen who were waiting there to do feature stories.

Actually, for a short time, he could only distinguish dark from light. The pain was so intense that he was forced to lie down on a cot for an hour before he could leave the field, and he remained in bed at home the next day, and did not play at all in the fifth game in Boston. On the train to St. Louis, for the sixth and seventh games, Doerr remained in his berth throughout the trip and, when he started the sixth game of the series, the headache still bothered him.

"I get them once, perhaps twice a season," he explained. "The sun causes them and the sun cures them, believe it or not."

That is exactly what happened to him in the series. When he went out to begin play in the sixth game at St. Louis, he still was not himself. Yet, after a few innings, he was as good as new, and he finished the series without further trouble or pain. The only hit he got in the sixth game came on his first time at bat.

"I still had the headache," he said later, "but, after it had cleared up, I did not get any more hits. Maybe I should play with headaches all the time."

Doerr is supposed to be weak on high pop flies.

The sun beats down on the right side of the field at Fenway Park with terrific intensity. Doerr wears sun glasses when he plays there, and takes his share of pop flies, rarely missing them. Occasionally, however, the sun hits him with such a glare that he is in danger of losing the ball. When that happens, he calls to Pesky, the Red Sox shortstop, who is always close to him on these fly balls, and Pesky makes the catch.

Doerr is the field captain of the Red Sox, an honor which he has earned by virtue of his steadiness in the field, his knowledge of opposing batters and his ten years of experience. He calls all infield signals, decides whether he or Pesky is to cover second base when there is a man on first, and is responsible for positional play of all fielders. It is Doerr who waves the outfield in and out, to the left and right. He talks over each batter with Cronin before a game, and he knows where every opposing hitter is most likely to place the ball.

He is a hopelessly enthusiastic camera fan. When the Red Sox are in Boston, Doerr has his movie camera on hand, and he takes scores of reels of pictures—of his mates, of opposing ball players, of anything that catches his fancy—on the ball field. Often, when photographers line up Red Sox stars for pictures, Doerr stands beside them, his camera

grinding out pictures which he later shows to his family and friends on his own screen at home.

He will talk pictures and picture-making with anyone who shows the slightest interest in the subject. His friend and team-mate, Rudy York, is also a movie camera fan, and the two often take pictures of each other at bat during a ball game. When both are in action at the same time, Doerr hands his camera to a team-mate to get pictures of the play on the field. Thanks to friends on the team who did not get into action a great deal, Doerr has a nearly complete set of pictures on the 1946 World Series.

Doerr is never out of condition. He is a clean-living athlete, who neither smokes nor drinks. Baseball is his business, and he makes no attempt to be anything other than a ball player. During the winter, he spends his time hunting and fishing and supervising the work on his mink farm in Oregon. Under the lush banner of Tom Yawkey, he has done well financially, and he has invested his money intelligently. During a good season, he makes almost as much out of his mink farm as he does out of baseball.

Of all the Red Sox players, Doerr is one of the quietest. Outside of Dave Ferriss, he has less to say than any of the members of the club. Yet,

among friends, he is talkative and affable, and he is one of the most approachable men on the entire team. He is always courteous and polite to strangers, and is among the most patient and liberal men in baseball when it comes to autographing baseballs, score-cards and anything else within reason that fans ask him to sign. He is a fair public speaker, although a somewhat bashful one, but he is always willing to make an appearance on the platform, especially if it is for youngsters or for charitable purposes.

Doerr is one of the few native Southern Californians who left that gentle land to live elsewhere. That is practically a major crime in the books of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, which prides itself as having the fastest growing city in the world to publicize. Few indeed are the rebels who, born and brought up in its environs, ever desert the sunshine for harsher climates.

While Doerr was playing ball for Hollywood and San Diego, he became friendly with Lester Cook, trainer of the club. Cook raved about Oregon, and, every year, when the season was over, he packed himself up to the north country of the Pacific Coast. Doerr, brought up in the shadows of one of the nation's great cities, became interested,

and, in 1936, he let Cook persuade him to go along on a trip north.

Cook took Bobby up to the Rogue River country of Oregon, a wild woodlands district, replete with animals waiting to be hunted and fish waiting to be angled. From Gold Beach, Oregon, they took a boat forty miles to the town of Illahe, Oregon. It is the only way possible to get to Illahe, hidden away in the timberlands of the great northwest.

Doerr fell in love with both the place and its one school teacher, Miss Monica Terpin. She taught at a typical little red schoolhouse, the only one in the district for miles around. She had children from the kindergarten age up to the eighth grade, and the biggest class she ever taught consisted of ten pupils. Her home was in Illahe, and she was one of its few permanent residents.

Bobby married her on October 24, 1938, and they have a boy named Don Robert, who was four years old in 1946. Mrs. Doerr and her son go to Boston with Bobby every year, and they live as private a life as it is possible for a ball player and his family to live in a baseball-mad city like the Hub.

The family stay in Boston during the entire

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baseball season, after first accompanying Bobby to Sarasota, Florida, for the annual spring training season. They usually drive the long trip from Oregon to Sarasota to Boston and, as soon as the season is over, they head back for the wilds of Oregon, usually by way of Los Angeles, where members of Doerr's family still live. Don Robert is thus one of the most well-travelled young men of his age in America. He has crossed the country from west to east and back and up and down both coasts twice every year of his short life, and he will continue to do so as long as Doerr stays with the Red Sox, which will probably be indefinitely.

The former Monica Terpin obviously was not the only attraction in Illahe. Bobby, the Southern Californian, liked the life up there so much that he bought a 160-acre ranch, and built a rambling home on it, where, in the dead of winter, he and his little family can always be located by baseball fans who want to start from Gold Beach and negotiate those forty miles up the river. The Doerrs even get their mail that way.

Shortly after he built the ranch at Illahe, Doerr purchased the mink farm near Eugene, Oregon. His wife's family runs it for him, and Bobby frequently visits the place. When his baseball days are over, he will spend all of his time between the



rich hunting and fishing country of his adopted home and the mink farm, which will provide him with his living when he no longer can play second base as he has been playing it for the past decade.

His first love, however, is baseball, and he will stay in the game as long as he can. He is smart enough and sensible enough to make some team a great manager some day, and the name of Doerr is likely to be in baseball's limelight for many years to come, even after his playing days are over.

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### ROBERT PERSHING DOERR

Born, April 7, 1918, at Los Angeles, Calif.

Height, 5.10½. Weight, 170. Green eyes and black hair.

Throws and bats right-handed.

Nationality—German-English.

Married Monica Terpin, October 24, 1938.

Hobbies—Hunting and fishing.

Outstanding performances—Accepted 349 consecutive chances without an error, May 20, 1943 (second game) to July 23, 1943 (first game), for major league record. Led league second basemen in fielding, 1940, 1942 and 1943; in putouts, 1940-43; assists, 1943; double plays, 1938-40-43.

Named Most Valuable Player, American League, by *The Sporting News*, 1944. Named as second baseman for *The Sporting News* All-Star Team, 1944.

| Year | Club      | Lea.   | Pos. | G                     | AB  | R   | H   | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | B.A. | PO  | A   | E  | F.A. |
|------|-----------|--------|------|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----|------|-----|-----|----|------|
| 1934 | Hollywood | P.C.L. | 2B   | 67                    | 201 | 12  | 52  | 6  | 0  | 0  | 11  | .259 | 135 | 164 | 14 | .955 |
| 1935 | Hollywood | P.C.L. | 2B   | 172                   | 647 | 87  | 205 | 22 | 8  | 4  | 74  | .317 | 444 | 466 | 38 | .960 |
| 1936 | San Diego | P.C.L. | 2B   | 175                   | 695 | 100 | 238 | 37 | 12 | 2  | 77  | .342 | 399 | 504 | 33 | .965 |
| 1937 | Boston    | Amer.  | 2B   | 55                    | 147 | 22  | 33  | 5  | 1  | 2  | 14  | .224 | 94  | 124 | 6  | .973 |
| 1938 | Boston    | Amer.  | 2B   | 145                   | 509 | 70  | 147 | 26 | 7  | 5  | 80  | .289 | 372 | 420 | 26 | .968 |
| 1939 | Boston    | Amer.  | 2B   | 127                   | 525 | 75  | 167 | 28 | 2  | 12 | 73  | .318 | 336 | 431 | 19 | .976 |
| 1940 | Boston    | Amer.  | 2B   | 151                   | 595 | 87  | 173 | 37 | 10 | 22 | 105 | .291 | 401 | 480 | 21 | .977 |
| 1941 | Boston    | Amer.  | 2B   | 132                   | 500 | 74  | 141 | 28 | 4  | 16 | 93  | .282 | 290 | 389 | 20 | .971 |
| 1942 | Boston    | Amer.  | 2B   | 144                   | 545 | 71  | 158 | 35 | 5  | 15 | 102 | .290 | 376 | 453 | 21 | .975 |
| 1943 | Boston    | Amer.  | 2B   | 155                   | 604 | 78  | 163 | 32 | 3  | 16 | 75  | .270 | 415 | 490 | 9  | .990 |
| 1944 | Boston*   | Amer.  | 2B   | 125                   | 468 | 95  | 152 | 30 | 10 | 15 | 81  | .325 | 341 | 363 | 17 | .976 |
| 1945 | Boston**  | Amer.  |      | (In military service) |     |     |     |    |    |    |     |      |     |     |    |      |

\* Played final game for Boston, September 3, 1944, then reported for duty in Army.

\*\* Entered U. S. Army September 19, 1944; discharged December, 1945.

### ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

| Year   | League   | Pos. | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | B.A. | PO | A | E | F.A.  |
|--------|----------|------|----|---|---|----|----|----|-----|------|----|---|---|-------|
| 1941   | American | 2B   | 3  | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   | .000 | 0  | 0 | 0 | .000  |
| 1942   | American | 2B   | 4  | 1 | 2 | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3   | .500 | 3  | 3 | 0 | 1.000 |
| 1944   | American | 2B   | 3  | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   | .000 | 4  | 1 | 1 | .833  |
| 1946   | American | 2B   | 2  | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   | .000 | 1  | 1 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Totals |          |      | 12 | 1 | 2 | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3   | .167 | 8  | 5 | 1 | .929  |

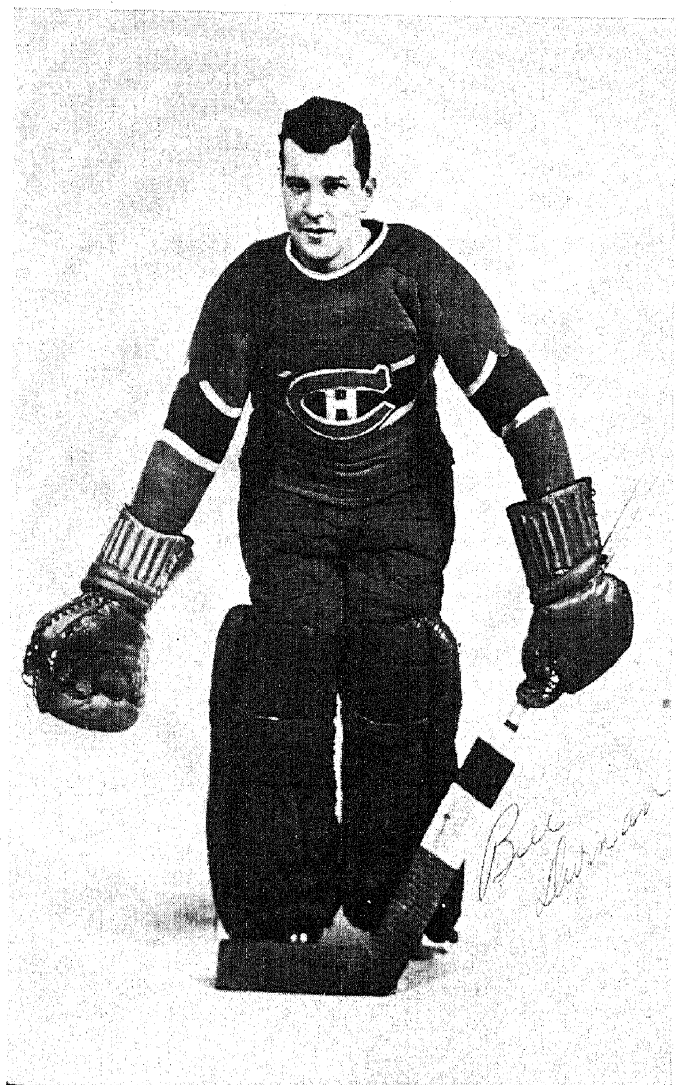
### WORLD SERIES RECORD

| Year | Club   | Lea.  | Pos. | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | B.A. | PO | A  | E | F.A.  |
|------|--------|-------|------|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|-----|------|----|----|---|-------|
| 1946 | Boston | Amer. | 2B   | 6 | 22 | 1 | 9 | 1  | 0  | 1  | 3   | .409 | 18 | 31 | 0 | 1.000 |

WILLIAM RONALD DURNAN

*“Horatio at the Net”*





WILLIAM RONALD (BILL) DURNAN



## CHAPTER V

WILLIAM RONALD DURNAN

"HORATIO AT THE NET"

ONCE every half dozen years or so, the National Hockey League produces a great goal tender. The list is not long, for the league, in its present setup, has been operating for less than thirty years. Of hallowed memory is the name of Georges Vezina, who guarded the nets for fifteen years for the Montreal Canadiens, and who practically died in harness.

Vezina's name has been perpetuated by the league fathers in the form of a trophy, annually presented to the outstanding major league goal tender of the season. Only twice has this cup been won three times in succession. Only twice has a first year man won it.

The first man to capture the Vezina Trophy three years in a row was George Hainsworth of the Montreal Canadiens, who had a lien on the cup from 1926 to 1929. The second to win the trophy thrice in succession was William Ronald Durnan of the Montreal Canadiens.

The first rookie to win the trophy was Frank Brimsek of the Boston Bruins, who did it in the 1938-39 season. The second was William Ronald Durnan of the Montreal Canadiens. This William Ronald Durnan is the outstanding goalie in the business right now. He broke into the big leagues in 1943, won the cup that year and has been winning it ever since, to become the first player to retain the cup four years.

Durnan is an unusual star in several respects. In the first place, he is a huge, powerful citizen, built more like a defense man than a goal tender. In the second, he is at an age when most hockey players are well past their prime, for he was born on January 22, 1915 in Toronto, and was thirty-two years old when, during the 1946-47 season, he captured the Vezina Cup for the fourth straight time.

A hockey player beyond his twenties is almost always far past his peak. Hockey is sportdom's fastest and roughest game. Great stars usually hit their prime between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-six. Yet Durnan was twenty-eight before he reached the top rung in the hockey ladder. Even then, he needed a break, for the Canadiens had a good regular goalie in Paul Bibeault, whom



they sold to Toronto just before he went into the Canadian Army in 1943.

Montreal had not won a Stanley Cup in a dozen years when Durnan appeared on the scene. He led the team to the cup in his first year with them, and, in the 1945-46 season, two years later, Durnan was a principal factor in their winning it again, to give the Canadiens hockey's world's championship in two years out of three. Actually, the Canadiens led the league in all four of Durnan's years with them, but they were eliminated in the 1945 play-offs by Toronto.

Although hockey, in common with most other popular spectator sports in America, is a team game, there is no major sport in which one player can make or break a team as easily. The greatest forwards and defense men in the world can get nowhere in hockey unless they are backed up by a good goal tender. Conversely, with <sup>a</sup> great goal tender, mediocre teams can always manage to get by.

As it happens, the Canadiens, during their present domination of the hockey picture, are by no means a mediocre team. They are well-balanced, well-coached and champions in every sense of the word. But it is significant that they struggled

along for years in the doldrums of the National Hockey League until Durnan came along, and then, suddenly, they became almost invincible.

Durnan's career is fairly typical of the careers of most of the great hockey players down through the years—typical up to a point. The others moved up through the ranks of the various amateur and semi-professional hockey leagues and, by the time they left their 'teens, they were in the National loop. Durnan stayed with lower classification leagues far longer than he should have.

Part of the reason for this lapse on the part of major league magnates to pick him up is the obvious fact that there is room for only six goal tenders in the big hockey show. Goalies, as a rule, are durable enough to play through every game of every season over a period of anywhere from four to eight years. A substitute goalie gets into action so seldom that most National Hockey League teams do not even carry a spare netminder on their rosters. If they need one in a hurry, they can get one on twenty-four hours' notice and, in a dire emergency, they can borrow one for an evening.

Goal tenders are so well-padded that they rarely get hurt badly enough to prevent them from finishing the game in which they are injured, so the dire emergency almost never comes up. The result

is that more than one potentially great goalie languishes in the minor leagues for his entire career, simply because he never has the opportunity to break into the select circle of half a dozen.

Another reason why Durnan failed to move up earlier in his career was the fact that, in the peculiar setup which characterizes big league hockey, nearly every minor league, semi-professional and amateur team that is organized is either the property of or has a working agreement with one specific major league team. Durnan moved up in the Montreal chain, although he got into it late in his career. His only hope of getting a big break would be if Montreal needed a goalie. If any other major league team wanted one, that club could dip into its own resources.

Durnan was born and brought up in Toronto, a hotbed of hockey, an incubator for many a great hockey player. Hockey is to Canada what baseball is to America. The weather in the Dominion is suitable for the ice game, and all Canadian youngsters who follow sport make hockey their favorite, just as all American boys love baseball.

Bill was too big and too slow to keep up with his fellow hockey enthusiasts. As a youngster, he played in Church League hockey in Toronto and, when hardly in his 'teens, he was coached by Steve

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Faulkner of Westmoreland Church in Toronto. It was Faulkner who convinced Durnan that, even though he was not fast enough to play a forward or defense position, he was ideal in build and temperament to become a better than average goal tender.

To this day, Durnan credits Faulkner with making a major league hockey player out of him, even though it is a decade and a half since Faulkner worked with him. The coach taught him the fine points of his position, encouraged him to hitch his wagon to a hockey star and kept him in the groove which eventually led to stardom and international fame.

At eleven, Bill was playing in City League hockey around Toronto. When he was sixteen, in 1931, he played as a junior for the North Toronto team in the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, the first rung in Canada's intricate organized hockey ladder. He was a goalie then, and he has been a goalie ever since.

Durnan deviated a few times from his ambition to play hockey for a living. In the first place, he was not sure that he could make a living at the game. In the second, he had a strong leaning towards baseball, and, more than once, toyed with the idea of giving up hockey and concentrating

his attention on the American national pastime, which he loves and follows as avidly as any American baseball fan.

He was a fine shortstop, but he could not hit, and that was what kept him from going into professional baseball seriously. However, he did play, and still does indulge heavily in softball, which, in many parts of both the United States and Canada, is assuming the proportions of a major sport. His skill as a softball player had much to do with his skill as a goal tender, for, by playing softball, he built up an amazing ability to use both his hands. As a result, Durnan is perhaps the greatest goalie in the history of big-time hockey in the use of his hands. He catches the puck more often than any of his contemporaries, and makes as many stops with those big, capable hands as he does with his stick.

Until 1936, Durnan continued to play hockey around his home town of Toronto. In 1932, he was with the Sudbury Juniors. In 1933 and 1934, still at a junior age, he played for the Toronto Seniors. Late in the 1934 season, he was injured. He decided then and there to give up the idea of looking for a future in hockey. He hung up his stick, his pads, his skates and his gloves and began seeking other fields to conquer.

He was fed up with the game and discouraged with his own apparent lack of ability. He turned his face northward and trekked up to the wilds of northern Ontario. He liked the outdoor life and toyed with the idea of making a career in the thick of the Ontario woods.

But the lure of the game was too much for him to resist. He played no hockey in 1935, when he was twenty, an age when most budding hockey stars are anxiously working towards the big tent of the game. In 1936, still up in northern Ontario, Durnan decided to give the game and himself another chance. It was the most important and the luckiest decision of his life.

He hooked on with the Kirkland Lake Blue Devils. It was a hand-picked team, an amateur organization in an amateur league, but studded with potential stars. Durnan was far and away the best goalie in that section of Canada, and he spent four happy years with the team.

More important, he met and married Amanda Faye Kent during his stay at Kirkland Lake. The couple have two daughters, Deanna, born in 1940, and Brenda, born in 1945. Mrs. Durnan, an inveterate movie fan, named her first child after Deanna Durbin, the actress.

Her husband, in the meantime, decided to settle

down in the neighborhood of Kirkland Lake, where he established himself in an off-season job. His wife was born and brought up in that region and the life in general suited Durnan so well that he again virtually gave up the idea of making a career out of professional hockey. He played the game because he liked it; it kept him in shape and it gave him a chance to get around during the winter. But, during his stay at Kirkland Lake, hockey became secondary with him.

For four years, buried in the wilds of Canada, Bill was happy with his wife, his little family and his life in the outdoors. He rarely visited Toronto and had no intention of ever returning to the hurly-burly of city life. But once again, his idea of giving up the game went awry.

He played with the Blue Devils from 1936 through 1939. The team in 1939 emerged from a welter of hockey activity as amateur champions of Canada, largely through the terrific goal-tending job done by Bill Durnan. By then, Durnan was twenty-four, an age when he should have been an established big league star if he intended to make a business of playing hockey. With the Canadian championship went the traditional Allan Cup. On their road to the cup, the Blue Devils, with Durnan playing in the nets, defeated the

powerful Montreal Royals, owned and operated as a farm club for the Canadiens.

The Royals were so impressed that they invited Durnan to go to Montreal and tend the nets for them. He gave the matter a lot of thought. He liked Kirkland Lake, it was his wife's home and had become his, and, if he moved to Montreal, it would mean going back to the life from which he had turned away four years before, and establishing himself in a big city for at least six months of the year. He talked it over with his wife, thought it out thoroughly, and finally decided to give it a trial. If he could hit the trail for the major leagues, he figured it would be worth while. If, after a year with the Royals, he could not see himself going any further, he would give up the idea and return to the woods and the mining country which he had learned to love.

He played three years with the Royals, and he set no hockey worlds on fire. However, as the goalie for the Canadiens' best farm team, he was, actually, the second string goal tender for the major league club, and, had the necessity arose, would have been automatically promoted at any time during the period he was with the Royals.

During his first year with them, in 1940, the Royals went to the finals of the Eastern Canadian



championships. His memories of the 1941 and 1942 seasons are not too happy. In his own words, he describes them succinctly and briefly, by saying, "Forget it." The Canadiens must have felt pretty much the same way about those years. Montreal, by nature a great hockey town, had not seen a championship or a Stanley Cup in more than a decade. In 1941, the Canadiens finished fifth in the six-club league and were eliminated immediately in the play-offs by Detroit.

In 1942, while Durnan was still standing before the nets for the Royals, the parent club was getting nowhere. The Canadiens finished fourth in the National Hockey League standing and the Boston Bruins eliminated them in the first of the play-off series. Bibeault was still playing goal for them, and, when the 1942-43 season ended, they sold him to Toronto.

That set the stage for Durnan's jump into the big time. Although the Royals were not an outstanding team, Coach Dick Irvin of the Canadiens had been keeping his eye on the big man who was, to all intents and purposes, his second ranking goal tender. His team needed some kind of a lift, and Irvin figured that, perhaps, a change in the nets would help.

How much it would help, even Irvin did not

dream. He liked Durnan's play, but he never thought the huge, friendly, easy-going, transplanted, Kirkland Lakes citizen would turn out to be one of the greatest goalies since the halcyon days of Vezina himself. He felt that Durnan deserved a tryout with the Canadiens. If Bill had helped the club to finish higher in the standing, that would be all right with Irvin. Instead, Durnan made the Canadiens the most dangerous team in the league.

Durnan was guarding the Canadiens' goal as the 1943 season began. He was twenty-eight years old and had never played in a National Hockey League game in his life. He was practically a wartime replacement, and too old to be starting a career in a game as fast and as killing as hockey. Irvin had his tongue in his cheek when he introduced Durnan to the rest of the league.

The results were electrifying. The Canadiens had last won a championship in 1931, twelve years before. Thanks to Durnan, they breezed to the top by one of the largest margins in the history of the league. They won the title by twenty-five points, finishing far, far ahead of the second place Detroit Red Wings. In hockey, each victory is worth two points and each tie one. The 1943-44

Canadiens won thirty-eight games and tied seven for a total of eighty-three points. They lost but five games all season. And Bill Durnan, the old man who was past his prime before he started, was in the nets from start to finish.

Opposing teams scored 109 goals against him in fifty games, an average of barely more than two goals per game. Not a single opposing goalie averaged less than three goals each game that year. Since the Vezina Trophy goes automatically to the regular goalie who is scored on the least during the season, Durnan captured the cup with no arguments from any corner, to become the first rookie to win it since Frank Brimsek astonished the hockey world by holding opponents to seventy-six goals in forty-eight games for an average of well under two.

The Canadiens, after winning the championship, did not stop there. With Durnan guarding their nets, they went on to eliminate Montreal by winning four out of five games in the semi-finals of the Stanley Cup play, and then trounced the Chicago Black Hawks in four straight games to take the cup home with them. It was one of the most perfect records of all time, for, against two opponents, the Canadiens lost but one game during the

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entire play-offs. In the nine games, only fourteen goals were scored on Durnan.

No longer one of the door mats of the league, the Canadiens were now in the big time. The 1944-45 season was coming up, and, with their sensational rookie goalie coming back, at the tender age of twenty-nine, they figured to be contenders that year. But they did not figure on winning the title for the second straight season, but that is exactly what they did. This time the race was a little closer, as the Montreal club picked up eighty points and finished only thirteen ahead of the second place Hawks.

Durnan, however, kept a margin of forty goals between himself and his nearest competitor, Frank McCool of Toronto. Bill was scored on 121 times for an average of 2.4 goals per game. By leading the league in this respect, he won the Vezina Trophy again and proved, beyond any doubt, that he was the best goalie in the business, and no flash in the pan, as many expected after his great first year.

The luck of the Canadiens and Durnan, if winning championships and Stanley Cup play-offs can be called luck, failed them in the Stanley Cup series which followed the 1944-45 season. They were eliminated in the semi-final round by To-

ronto, which went on to win the cup in a series which went to seven games against Detroit. The Canadiens were shut out by Harry Lumley, the Wings' goalie, 1-0, in the first game, and lost the second. They could not make up the deficit, and for the first time since Durnan joined the team, they failed to reach the finals of hockey's blue ribbon event.

What they could not accomplish that year meant nothing to them. In the 1945-46 season, with Durnan in the goal for the third straight year, the Canadiens won their third straight championship, although this time they were battling with the Boston Bruins, back at pre-war strength, all the way to the wire. They ended up with sixty-five points, to beat out the powerful Boston club by nine points.

Durnan, as usual, was the least scored against goalie in the league. In fifty games, opponents scored 134 times on him, which put him twenty-two goals ahead of the Boston combination. Brimsek was still in the service when the season began, but the great Bruins' goalie returned during the campaign. He was not the goal tender he had been in pre-war days, but, even if he had been, he would have had trouble competing with durable Durnan.

Durnan, at thirty-two, gives not the slightest sign that he will get worse before he gets better. His 1945-46 record gave him the Vezina Cup for the third straight year. His activities in the Canadiens' net made them favorites to win both championship and cup again in the 1946-47 season. He has made them one of the most consistently winning teams in hockey history.

At twenty, Bill Durnan had retired, with no apparent intention of ever attempting to play hockey for money again. At thirty-two, he is still going strong, and he laughs when anyone mentions the word "retirement" to him.

"Why," he said, after the Canadiens had won the Stanley Cup by taking four straight from Chicago and four out of five from Boston in 1946, "I don't have the least desire to quit now. I'm getting along pretty well, and as long as I can keep going, I will. I know I'm too old to be talking that way, but there's no reason for me to call it a career now."

Durnan flatly refuses to consider himself a great star. On the contrary, if you ask him, he will tell you that he is very fortunate to be where he is in hockey—at the very top of the profession. He is liberal in his praise of others, and he is soundly convinced that he never would have won any cups

or trophies, nor would the team have won any titles or cups, if it had not been for his mates.

"You know," he remarked, recently, "I think most hockey fans make the mistake of overrating people like me. Sure, a good goalie is absolutely essential to a team. But a good goalie can be made to appear great by the work of his team-mates, and that's what has happened to me.

"No goalie can stop every shot that is fired at him. That's a physical impossibility. The greatest goal tenders of all time have an average of more than one goal a game scored on them. Almost anything can happen in a hockey game. You might find yourself behind a pile-up, and you can't even see the puck. The next thing you know, someone has poked it right through you into the net. A great forward can almost always beat a great goalie on an open shot. If you don't have anyone in front of you protecting that net, and an opposing player is bearing down on you all alone, you're practically at his mercy.

"Well, that's what has made me look so good. I've had great defense men in front of me, and, without them, I wouldn't have looked any better than any other goal tender in the league. That's why I don't think that the number of goals scored is necessarily an indication of a goalie's ability. A

great defense can make a good goalie look great, because he doesn't have as many shots to stop."

Durnan was not making these remarks with any false modesty. He knows that he is a good goalie, but he refuses to call himself "great" in the sense that Vezina was great, or Hainsworth, or Brimsek, when the Boston star first came into the National Hockey League.

Yet, who is Durnan to judge? Any player in the league will tell you that Durnan is the greatest goalie in the business today, and rapidly reaching a point where he may some day be classed as one of the great goalies of all time. In fact, more than one hockey star has told this writer that Durnan compares with the great goalies down through the years.

Actually, the time to compare Durnan with the immortals of hockey has arrived. Any man who can win top goal-tending honors in the fastest game in sport four years in succession must have something. And Durnan's career may still be far from over.



**WILLIAM RONALD DURNAN**

He is ambidextrous. 6 feet tall. 185 pounds.

Last amateur club—Montreal Royals Seniors.

| National Hockey League Record |           |    |     |    |      | Playoffs |    |    |      |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----|-----|----|------|----------|----|----|------|
| Season                        | Club      | GP | GA  | SO | GAPG | GP       | GA | SO | GAPG |
| 1943-44                       | Canadiens | 50 | 109 | 2  | 2.18 | 9        | 14 | 1  | 1.55 |
| 1944-45                       | Canadiens | 50 | 121 | 1  | 2.42 | 6        | 15 | 0  | 2.50 |
| 1945-46                       | Canadiens | 40 | 104 | 4  | 2.60 | 9        | 20 | 0  | 2.22 |
| 1946-47                       | Canadiens | 60 | 138 | 4  | 2.30 |          |    |    |      |

Durnan won the George Vezina Trophy as the goalkeeper with the least number of goals scored on him during regular play for the four seasons that he has been in the NHL.



DAVID MEADOW (BOO) FERRISS

*“The Pride of Mississippi”*





DAVID MEADOW (BOO) FERRISS



## CHAPTER VI

DAVID MEADOW (BOO) FERRISS  
"THE PRIDE OF MISSISSIPPI"

ONE morning in early May of 1945, Manager Joe Cronin of the Boston Red Sox picked up the telephone in his Fenway Park office in Boston and called his boss, Owner Tom Yawkey, in New York. After the usual casual greetings and a short talk on the business of baseball in general, Cronin said, "Tom, I'd like to have you meet Dave Ferriss."

A huge, handsome, twenty-three-year-old youngster, fresh out of the U. S. Army Air Corps, shyly took the phone. In a soft, somewhat embarrassed voice, he drawled a friendly, "Hello."

For a minute or two, he listened, smiling, while Yawkey enthusiastically told him how much he enjoyed the news that Ferriss, in the first pitching start of his big league career, had shut out the Athletics in Philadelphia, giving them but five hits. When Yawkey had finished, the big boy from Mississippi said, very quietly, "I was lucky."

To this day, David Meadow Ferriss, born,

brought up in and still the first citizen of Shaw, Mississippi, thinks he is lucky. There is no major league star, of either his, or lesser ability, who is more modest, more unwilling to take credit for one of baseball's most amazing careers.

Down in Shaw, you have to say "Dave" half a dozen times before Ferriss knows you are addressing him. In his home town, and in all the towns around it, he is "Boo," and it took him a long time before he could get used to being called anything else. Somehow or other, the nickname "Boo" took a long time to catch on among baseball fans, for, to them, a booh is a catcall and a symbol of disfavor. In Boston, however, Dave is "Boo" at last, and, when he is pitching, no disfavor whatever is connected with the chorus of "Boos" that come from the stands.

He acquired the name as a baby, because he could not pronounce the word "Brother," in addressing Will Ferriss, who is older and considerably shorter than his famous brother. Dave was "Boo" when he was two years old, and, at twenty-four, when he reached the heights in hurling a four-hit shutout against the St. Louis Cardinals in the third game of the 1946 World Series, he was still "Boo."

Ferriss got off to one of the most sensational big



league starts in baseball history. He won the first eight games he pitched. He shut out his opposition four times during that stretch. The sixth successive victory, hurled exactly thirty-three days after he saw his second major league game, on May 27, 1945, almost landed him into baseball's hall of no-hit fame. Except for a single by Tony Cuccinello of the Chicago White Sox, Ferriss did not allow a single hit that day.

Cronin acquired Ferriss from the Red Sox farm in Louisville before Dave pitched a game for the Colonels. Dave reported to the club on April 24 in Washington, exactly one month after he had reported to Louisville which, in turn, was exactly one month after he had been released from the army because of asthma, an ailment which, for a short, tragic period, it was feared might ruin his baseball career before it was fairly started.

When Ferriss joined the Red Sox, he had seen but one major league game and that in Fenway Park in 1941. Griffith Park in Washington was the second major league field he had ever laid eyes on. Cronin brought him up on the strength of his record in the service, plus the fact that the Red Sox, who were without any of the great stars which paced them to the American League pennant in 1946, were desperate for pitchers.

And that was only part of the woes that befell the wartime 1945 Red Sox. Cronin himself broke his leg at the start of the season. His lineup was packed with has-beens and would-bes, wartime replacements, almost none of whom were with the team when it smashed its way through the American League a year later.

From April 24 to April 29, Ferriss sat on the bench and became accustomed to his new uniform. Then, on the 29th, the Red Sox, who had won one game and lost eight in succession to start the season, decided to gamble on the big guy with the soft Mississippi accent and the odd name which seemed to have one too many s's in it.

Dave got off to a terrible start against the Athletics. It was the first game of a Sunday double-header. Since the season was young, there was a fair crowd even at Shibe Park in Philadelphia. The tremendous, lumbering kid walked to the mound, picked up the horsehide—and promptly threw ten called balls in succession. It looked as if he could not even get the ball over the plate.

Somehow or other, after filling the bases with men he had walked, he got out of trouble in that first inning of his major league career. For the rest of the game, he gave his team-mates one case of heart failure after the next. He put Athletics

on in nearly every inning. Time after time, he gave them golden opportunities to score.

Yet, when the game was over, the Philadelphia club had not scored a run. The Athletics got eleven men on base that day—and could not push a single one of them across the plate. Ferriss had his first victory, and his first shutout. Furthermore, he came to bat three times and got three hits.

That was the day when Joe Cronin knew he had hit the jackpot. He may have had nothing else during that disappointing season of 1945 (the Red Sox finished seventh that year) but he did have something that no one else in the league had—Boo Ferriss.

The cautious Boston fans refused to get excited. With Ted Williams, Bobby Doerr, Dom DiMaggio, Tex Hughson and Johnny Pesky, the backbone of their ball club, in the service, new names meant nothing to them. They still had to be shown. Ferriss was just another of a long list of hitherto unknown names on a roster shot full of holes plugged up by names which baseball fans had never heard of.

But, when on May 6, Ferriss came back to pitch the first game of a double-header in the Yankee Stadium, they watched him closely, from 220 miles

away. And, when the big youngster from Dixie shut the Yankees out, 5-0, in their own back yard before a huge Sunday crowd, and got a double and a single for himself in the bargain, they were sold. The Red Sox may not have had a ball club, but they did have a ball player. The Yankee victory was Boo's second shutout in two starts. Just to make sure that the Red Sox were not the only club which respected him, the Yanks passed him intentionally when he came up as a pinch-hitter in the second game of that May 6 twin bill.

His record for the two games was one of the most amazing of all time. In his debut at Philadelphia, he had put eleven men on base. In his second game, at New York, he put twelve more men on base. Thus, in eighteen innings, Ferriss put twenty-three men on base, and did not allow one of them to score.

The team went west, and Boo won his third straight, this time in Detroit, 8-2. It was the first time an opposing team scored on him. He gave nine hits, and he kept his own consecutive hitting record clear by getting a single. He won his fourth in a row at Chicago, this time a four-hit shutout, and he got another hit in that game. The fifth straight was a 4-1 victory in Boston against St. Louis. The sixth was the one-hitter against the

White Sox, a game in which, for the first time, he was stopped at the plate himself. He won two more before the Yanks finally stopped him on June 10 in New York.

By then, Boo Ferriss was established as baseball's brightest 1945 light, a year which, because of the war, was devoid of stars, for the most part. He was the talk of the national game, the darling of Boston fans who love nothing more than they love their baseball stars.

As the Ferriss career rolled on, stories, fantastic stories, about him, began to drift around. He could hit and field as well as he could pitch. He could make a baseball do anything but talk. Most unusual of all, he was ambidextrous.

Some of the stories were true, some of them were fanciful, and added luster to accomplishments which already had luster enough. Actually, Boo is ambidextrous only in that he can throw a ball with his left hand. He cannot, however, pitch with it with any degree of effectiveness. For awhile, shortly after his star shot high into the baseball firmament, there were tales to the effect that Cronin might pitch Ferriss with his right arm one day and with his left the next. Needless to say, neither Cronin nor Ferriss had any intention of trying to pull the stunt.

It made no difference to Boston baseball followers that their team was getting nowhere. In a war year which found most of the stars in the service, Ferriss was in the clear, because he had just come out of the service himself. Every time he stepped to the mound, it seemed, the big boy had only to pick up the ball, throw it at opposing batters, and automatically add to his stature as a hero.

Baseball fans the country over stopped asking "Who won?" and replaced the question with, "What did Ferriss do?" Never in baseball history has one man come up so rapidly and captured the imagination of so many fans, to the exclusion of all others.

And then, suddenly, came a collapse. Boo Ferriss began losing ball games. It was not hard to believe, because no rookie had ever won his first eight games in succession, four of them by shut-outs and then continued on to seriously attack established records of established stars. In late July, the asthma that had knocked Boo out of the air corps began working on him. For awhile, it looked as if it would knock him out of baseball, too.

The boy was in agony. He could hardly breathe at times, yet, when his turn came to pitch, he went to the hill and tried, only to get knocked out of the

box by the same teams which previously had been easy meat for him. He could not last three innings. Opposing batters began to hit everything he threw at them. Cronin and the Boston fans threw up their hands in despair, yet they stuck to Ferriss and believed in him.

He won his nineteenth game of the season, and then waited weeks before he could win his twentieth. When he finally staggered through that one in September, he had matched the records of ancient Grover Cleveland Alexander and more modern Wes Ferrell, the only major league pitchers ever to win twenty games or more their first season. He ended the season with a record of twenty-one victories and ten defeats, which was magnificent for anyone, especially a rookie, but a slight disappointment to fans who had expected him to keep up the dizzy pace he had set for himself early in the season.

The asthma attack told the real story of Ferriss' late season trouble. It presaged another story, however, a story which, added to the fact that baseball would be at full strength again in 1946, sounded as though Boo might be strictly a flash in the pan.

He went back to Shaw a hero, however, and rightly. Aside from his ability as a ball player,

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Ferriss had been a credit to himself and the folks back home in whatever he did. He never let his success go to his head. He never pushed aside a youthful autograph hunter. He never showed anything but the utmost courtesy to anyone who approached him, both friend and stranger. And, on top of that, he was instrumental in helping twenty people out of a burning building during a fire in Malden, Massachusetts.

That happened just before the 1945 season ended. Ferriss lived in the neighborhood. When the fire started, Boo stood by to watch it, but, for awhile, it was out of control. People trapped in the building were being assisted to safety by firemen, but there were more victims caught in the flames than there were firemen to help them out. Ferriss, completely disregarding the danger, gave them a hand, and he emerged one of the heroes of the conflagration.

Whatever the baseball world thought of his chances to maintain, in 1946, the standard he had set for himself in 1945, everyone was rooting for him to continue the pace in his second year. He went to Sarasota, Florida, for spring training with the Red Sox and there he met the great stars who, with his help, were to bring Boston its first pennant since 1918.



The odds were against him, in spite of his great 1945 record. Baseball is studded with cases of great freshmen who fall apart in their second year, especially pitchers. Many a forgotten first-year major league star has found himself back in the minors before the end of his second season.

So, Boo, like so many of his predecessors, was fighting the traditional second-year jinx. That, however, was not all he was fighting. His magnificent record had been set up in an off-year, when most of the stars of baseball were not in the game. What would happen when he faced the Greenbergs and the DiMaggios and the Kellers and the rest of the big guns of the American League? The pessimists gave him short notice. Ferriss might be a great pitcher against mediocre opposition, but wait until he faced the big boys!

On top of everything else was the asthma problem. If the ailment nearly wrecked his career, and did affect his record in 1945, what was to keep it from doing the same thing in 1946? The writers and the fans wondered audibly, and, in spite of their deep regard for Ferriss personally, were doubtful that he would do the club much good in his second year.

There were two men who had no misgivings about Boo's second year in major league baseball.

One was Joe Cronin. The other was Ferriss. Neither said very much about it during the spring season. Ferriss simply minded his own business, getting into shape, working along slowly, rounding himself into form. And, when the season started, he was ready.

While a skeptical baseball world watched, Dave Ferriss led his team-mates through one of the most amazing winning streaks in baseball history, a winning streak which got the Red Sox off to such a terrific start that not a team in the league could even come within hailing distance of them.

From late April until May 11, the Red Sox won fifteen games in succession. They lost a game in Boston to the New York Yankees, and then swept through every team in the league until they lost again to the Yankees, this time in New York. By the time the streak was over, they were six games or more ahead of the field, and all the king's horses and all the king's men in the league couldn't put themselves together again.

Ferriss was one of the pitching spearheads of the streak. Cronin had figured before the season started that he would have pitching troubles. He could see Tex Hughson as his ace, and he had hopes for Ferriss.

Not only Hughson and Ferriss, but Mickey Har-

ris and Joe Dobson came through for Cronin and his Red Sox while they were so hot that no team in the league could come near them. One of the four was almost always in the box, and, if one faltered, the Red Sox had good relief pitching to finish up shaky games.

That streak won the pennant for the Red Sox. And, not until long after it was over, weeks after the Yanks stopped the mad Red Sox rush, did Ferriss lose his first 1946 ball game.

He won eight in succession in his major league bow in 1945. In 1946, the man who had to battle the second-year jinx, the return of the game's top stars and the ever-present fear of a recurrence of asthma, won ten games in a row before he was finally stopped.

The asthma came back in 1946, but not as seriously as in the previous year. Ferriss kept winning ball games until late August, but then, with the almost legendary figure "30" in victories within his grasp, his old physical trouble came back to plague him, with the result that he was frequently knocked out of the box.

He can still stand on one of the great two-year records of all time. In 1946, Ferriss won twenty-five games and lost six, so, in his first two years, he won forty-six games, which tied Ferrell's Ameri-

can League record for young rookie pitchers in their first two years. The mark was only one below the all-time major league record of forty-seven, held by Alexander.

All of the promise that Ferriss showed in 1945 he fulfilled in 1946. That he won one of the three games the Red Sox captured in the World Series they lost to the St. Louis Cardinals added more stature to the man as a pitcher. That he was saved for the final and seventh game and then failed took nothing away from his magnificence. Better men than Ferriss have lost crucial World Series games and worse men than Ferriss have won them.

Boo Ferriss was always a big kid. When he was twelve years old, he was playing second base and shortstop around Shaw, and, not only playing it in the company of boys eighteen and nineteen, but batting fourth in their lineup. He was the best hitter in the town, and he set his sights for a baseball career at an age when most youngsters are still only hoping.

At Shaw High School, he was coached by Jim Flack, now baseball coach at Delta State Teachers College in Mississippi. When Boo was fifteen years old, Flack decided that he was built to be a pitcher, and pitching has been Ferriss' passion ever since. In 1938 and 1939, when Boo was about

seventeen years old, he led his high school to the Delta State championship two years in succession. He played in every single game, pitching when he was ready and playing in the infield the rest of the time. As a result, he not only helps the Red Sox hitting when he is pitching, but he is also a fifth infielder for them.

He entered Mississippi State University in the fall of 1939, and played baseball and basketball there, but his prime interest, of course, was baseball. Boo to this day is a good basketball player, however, and, in the off season, he does some coaching around his home town.

The first organized baseball nibble Boo received was from the Philadelphia Phils, then managed by Doc Prothro, whom Boo had met while he was at college. Ferriss, however, did not bite, since he figured that he was too young, and, besides, he wanted to continue to play college and semi-pro ball until he obtained his degree.

He might just as well have turned professional, as far as the degree was concerned. While baseball did not deprive him of it, the army did, for, when he went into the service in 1943, he still lacked a few months to graduation, and he has never had a chance to make them up, although he still hopes to do so.

Ferriss got his first look at a major league ball park in 1941, and that by accident. Happy Campbell, the University of Alabama baseball coach, who was a Red Sox scout, was impressed when Boo pitched a great game for Mississippi State against his team. Campbell talked to him, but Ferriss refused to sign. He did, however, agree to spend the summer playing in the Northern League, a semi-professional loop operating around Vermont and upper New York State. He joined the Brattleboro team, and his coach was another Red Sox scout, Bill Barrett.

Barrett knows a great ball player when he sees one. He did not try too openly to sell Ferriss the idea of signing a contract on the spot, but he did make the idea of playing major league ball as attractive as possible to the young giant from the deep south. Barrett took Boo to a ball game at Fenway Park late in the 1941 season, and there, he introduced Ferriss to the members of the Red Sox club, and sat with his protégé in the stands while Robert Moses (Lefty) Grove was winning the three hundredth game of his illustrious pitching career.

Ferriss left the ball park deeply impressed. He also now had the baseball bug badly, so badly that he was tempted to sign. Instead, he decided to

wait until he could pitch one more year at "Ole Miss."

So Boo went back home, and was still eligible for college ball in the spring of 1942, his junior year at college. He pitched every third game and played first base the rest of the time. Then, when the college season was over, he got in touch with Happy Campbell at Alabama, and told him that he was ready to put his name on a Red Sox contract.

That, of course, ended his college career. The Red Sox sent Boo to their Greensboro farm, where Heinie Manush, the old outfielder, was managing the club. Manush is an old hand at taking care of budding young ball players. He saw a great all-round star in Ferriss, but wisely kept Boo out of the infield, letting him concentrate on pitching and, occasionally, using him as a pinch-hitter. Greensboro won the pennant in its league that year, and Ferriss hung up a few local records when he won all three of the play-off games that he pitched.

The true development of Boo Ferriss as a major league star came while he was in the army. He was drafted in December of 1942, and reported for duty a month later. Of his twenty-five months in the service, Ferriss spent twenty of them at Ran-

dolph Field in Texas, and Randolph Field had one of the great army baseball teams during the war.

Ferriss' coach there was Bib Falk, former Chicago White Sox outfield star. Falk, like Manush, saw a potential star in the hulking youth, and he brought Ferriss along slowly, although he did let him play the outfield, as well as pitch. Two of Boo's mates on the team were men to whom he said good-bye in Texas in January of 1945, and did not see again until October of 1946. They were Howie Pollet and Enos Slaughter of the St. Louis Cardinals, who faced Ferriss in the World Series.

In an army league studded with stars of the caliber of Pollet and Slaughter, Ferriss, the unknown youngster from a town which no one outside of the immediate neighborhood had ever heard of, was the outstanding star. Pitching only occasionally, Boo won twenty games against opposition that was of big league grade. Playing in the outfield, he batted .417 and led the league at the plate.

The Boston skeptics who were afraid that he would fall apart when the majors got all their stars back forgot entirely that Ferriss had had all this experience in a league which was probably better than either of the big leagues during the war years.



Had they realized this fact, many of them would never have shown any lack of faith in the big guy who was such a sensation as a freshman.

The army discharged Boo on Feb. 24, 1945. On March 24, he reported to the Red Sox farm club, the Louisville Colonels in the American Association. At the time, Cronin figured that a year of double A baseball would do the boy a great deal of good.

But, when Cronin's pitching staff collapsed so completely, the Red Sox manager was desperate. He checked over what the team had on their farm clubs and, when he saw Ferriss' service record, he ordered Boo out of Louisville before the boy had pitched a single game for the Colonels. Ferriss reported to the Red Sox at Washington on April 24, and went on from there to everlasting baseball fame.

Ferriss is probably the most eligible bachelor in Mississippi. At twenty-five, he is still at large. During the World Series, his guests were his mother, his brother, Will, and his sister, Anne, who, incidentally, won the Mississippi State women's tennis championship three years in succession.

He reported to Sarasota in the spring of 1947,

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still shooting for a pitching record. Ferrell won twenty games in each of his first four years in the majors. Boo Ferriss wants to break that mark, and the odds are high that he will.

### DAVID MEADOW (BOO) FERRISS

Born, December 5, 1921 at Shaw, Miss.

Height, 6.02. Weight, 208. Grey eyes and brown hair.

Throws right and bats lefthanded.

Nationality—Scotch-Irish. Single.

Attended Mississippi State College three and one-half years. Outstanding performances—Winning 21 games in first season in majors, and defeating each American League team first time he faced them; established league record for most consecutive scoreless innings at start of major league career—23½.

Named by Baseball Writers Association of America to *The Sporting News* All-Star Major League Team, 1945.

| Year    | Club        | League   | G  | IP  | W  | L  | PC.       | H   | R   | ER. | SO | BB | Avg. |
|---------|-------------|----------|----|-----|----|----|-----------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|------|
| 1942    | Greensboro* | Piedmont | 21 | 130 | 7  | 7  | .500      | 94  | 40  | 32  | 98 | 53 | 2.22 |
| 1943-44 | Louisville  | A.A.     |    |     |    |    | (In Army) |     |     |     |    |    |      |
| 1945    | Boston      | American | 35 | 265 | 21 | 10 | .677      | 263 | 101 | 87  | 94 | 85 | 2.95 |

\*Recalled by Louisville at close of season and entered U. S. Army Air Corps, December 28, 1942; discharged, February 24, 1945.

### WORLD SERIES RECORD

| Year | Club   | League   | G | IP  | W | L | PC.   | H  | R | ER. | SO | BB | Avg. |
|------|--------|----------|---|-----|---|---|-------|----|---|-----|----|----|------|
| 1946 | Boston | American | 2 | 13½ | 1 | 1 | 1.000 | 13 | 3 | 3   | 4  | 2  | 2.03 |

JOHN LEONARD (JOHNNY) HOPP

*“Speed Merchant of Baseball”*





JOHN LEONARD (JOHNNY) HOPP



## CHAPTER VII

JOHN LEONARD (JOHNNY) HOPP  
"SPEED MERCHANT OF BASEBALL"

PERHAPS the one play which best typifies Johnny Hopp, the St. Louis Cardinals alumnus outfielder and first baseman now playing for the Boston Braves, was one which occurred during the 1946 season in a highly insignificant game between the Braves and the Phillies. Hopp had reached first base with a single of his own and Tommy Holmes, who followed him to the bat, also singled.

Holmes' hit was a dribbly one which barely trickled between the shortstop and the third baseman into very short left field, but Johnny Hopp, as he raced for second base, saw something in that single that none of the crowd, the Phils or even his Braves mates realized until they looked up and jumped to their feet to see Hopp rounding second and headed for third. While he was dashing for second, Hopp quickly noticed that the ball had gone too far out for the shortstop to retrieve it, yet it was rolling too slowly for the left fielder to

make a fast play at fielding it. So, as much on instinct as anything, Johnny Hopp's motorboat legs carried him right across second base and added additional revolutions along the pathway to third.

Did he make it? Of course he did. By the time the Phillies outfielder realized what was going on, Hopp was only twenty feet from third base. He covered those final feet with a swan dive that developed into a belly slide and carried him safely under the third baseman's waiting hands.

Before the inning was over Hopp scored. Had he been still on second base he would have died there. The run did not mean much to the Braves, for they won the ball game going away, as they say at the race tracks, but that one play with its spectacular speed and lightning thinking on the part of the base-runner just about sums up the career of Johnny Hopp, who has risen in the span of the brief decade of his professional baseball career to become one of the great players in the game.

Hopp has been dashing his way to fame and belly-sliding his way under all obstacles since his boyhood days in his homey hometown of Hastings, Nebraska. The roadways to big league success have not all been wide macadamized highways with signposts directing the way. Johnny Hopp has had to battle his way the hard way in many



instances, fighting off the shackles of the Cardinals chain gang and dogging his way to a regular berth on the St. Louis parent club when it was in its pennant heyday and overloaded with great stars. Hopp played seven seasons for the Cardinals from 1937 through 1945 and at the end of that span he was tendered one of the mightiest tributes ever paid a baseball player.

Manager Billy Southworth is a shrewd baseball man. Perhaps a shrewder one never lived. Reluctant old timers frequently compare him as a manager to John McGraw, the giant of the Giants, and in their book there is no higher mean for comparison. During his last stay with the Cardinals, from 1940 through 1945, Southworth managed them to three National League pennants, in 1942, 1943 and 1944. In Boston the new owners of the Braves franchise watched this and decided that Southworth was the man they needed in their progressive party plan to bring the National League bunting back to Boston, where it last flew in 1914. At the close of the 1945 season, they persuaded Southworth to leave his Cardinals of championship caliber and to come to Boston to start practically with nothing in the way of pennant material and to build himself a new home of pennant proportions.

That was indeed a noble tribute to Southworth, the nobler because of the cash settlement made upon his transfer, but the first thing that Southworth did upon taking over the reins of the Braves was to pass the tribute along in all its mightiness to Johnny Hopp.

"There's a player on the Cards I think we can get," Southworth told his new bosses. "He's the kind of ball player I like," and back of that conservative statement Southworth knew that in Hopp he would obtain the core of the new pennant-contending team he planned to construct for Boston. His team and his hopes for the future would be built around the chunky little combination of outfielder and first baseman, whom he had left behind in St. Louis.

The Braves bosses dug deeply on Southworth's recommendation. They paid \$40,000 to Sam Breadon, the Cardinals' owner, and on February 5, 1946, Johnny Hopp became the property of the Boston Braves.

There are many factors in the makeup of this tow-headed speed king that made that purchase price of \$40,000 cash well worth while. During the 1946 season he led the National League in batting for a good part of the way and was well up among the leading hitters at the season's close.

In the outfield, or at first base, where he is equally at home, he is a more than adequate fielder and thousands have thrilled to see him speeding across the pastures of the outfield to make a catch that seemed impossible from the moment the ball left the bat and possible only when Hopp gobbled it in. But, more than all that, Hopp is a heads-up ball player.

Southworth probably will not recall the instance, but it was he who christened Hopp with that title. One August Sunday of 1946, the manager was holding court for some sports writers before the Braves double-header scheduled for that day. The manager, with his arms and legs crossed, sat on a bench in the Braves dugout while the newsmen stood to one side so that Southworth could watch the pre-game practice with his keen eyes and at the same time impart with his witty tongue words of wisdom to the gentlemen of the press. The subject of the moment was Johnny Hopp.

"Hopp," said Southworth, "is a great base runner. I've seen many good ones, and I'll rate him close to the best—Ty Cobb. He's fast and he's alert to any break that's open to him. That's what really counts—his alertness. He's a heads-up ball player."

In Hastings, Nebraska, the city where Johnny Hopp was born and still lives with his wife and two children, the people would say to Southworth, "Well, he'd ought to be." The neighbors on South Chicago Avenue, where Johnny was born on July 18, 1916 and lived as a youngster, could not imagine any of the Hopp family not being athletes. There were six boys in the family of nine, and from the time each was old enough to know the difference between a baseball bat and a mashie niblick, the senior John Hopp had them interested in practically every form of sports.

Each of the Hopp boys quickly was awarded a nickname to match his looks or his personality. The oldest, Albert, was known around the dinner table as "Ruff," while Johnny, second oldest, was known as "Cotton," because of his cotton-white head of hair. That nickname still sticks by him in the butchered form of "Cotney"; even the baseball record books attribute this to Johnny. Around the National League circuit he's also called—for obvious reasons—"Old Motorboat," and anyone by the name of Hopp would naturally have "Hippety" pinned to him at more times than one. But Johnny says that "Hippety" correctly belongs to his younger brother Harry, former All American back from Nebraska University, who has

since played professional football for the Buffalo team of the All America Conference.

"Harry is Hippety Hopp," says Johnny Hopp. "Call me 'Hustle' Hopp, if you have to be alliterative. I don't mind that."

All the Hopps were athletes. At Hastings High School, Johnny starred in football, basketball and track. The school had no baseball team. In track he ran the dashes in speedy high school time and was a member of the State championship 880-yard relay team. He also broke the State javelin throwing record—setting a new record that stood only until his brother Harry entered high school. Then Harry broke Johnny's mark. The good people of Hastings have become used to associating the Hopps with records, however, for Wallace "Hosea" Hopp and Clifford "Bull" Hopp, the youngsters have since come along to establish themselves as two of the best golfers in the State, and "Bull" has also set himself up in shop as an All State half-back in 1945.

Johnny Hopp could have entered the professional field of almost any of the better-known sports, but he had just one big love, baseball. During Johnny's youth, his father was in the poultry business and his work often took him to the New York market. The senior Hopp also saw that it

took him to the Yankee Stadium, or the Polo Grounds. He would come back to Hastings, with tall tales for his sons about big league baseball and about his own one great hero, Rogers Hornsby. The Hopp boys would listen and say, "Dad, I wish I could see a big league game." All but Johnny.

He would listen and say, "Dad, some day I'm gonna play big league ball."

There are several people who deserve the credit of helping Johnny along the long road to the majors, but that same John Hopp, Sr. deserves all the credit for starting his son on the way. Most of the profits from the poultry business went into athletic equipment for the Hopp boys. One room of the Hopp household was practically an athletic storeroom, and the house on South Chicago Avenue was a gathering place for all the young athletes of the neighborhood. The Hastings team of the Nebraska State League, a Class D loop, had its ball park just one-half mile from the Hopp home, and while Johnny was a chunky youngster, he could just manage to squeeze his round body under a hole in the right field fence every single Saturday afternoon, and during the week, too, when there was no school.

High school baseball was not played at Hastings, but the broad program of American Legion

junior baseball reached into that town, and, as in so many instances, helped provide the necessary schooling in the fundamentals of the game for the youngsters. The Hastings Post 15 team was the first real baseball club, "with uniforms and everything," for which Johnny Hopp played. He pitched and played the outfield. He was the star of the team which reached the finals of the State championship in 1932, but in the championship game Hastings was beaten with Johnny Hopp on the mound, 6-3, by Omaha. Johnny lost the game pitching, but he almost won it with his bat. He hit a home run with two men on to provide Hastings its only three runs, and right then and there Johnny decided he would be an outfielder strictly.

His decision lasted until seven years later. Branch Rickey, then head of the St. Louis Cardinals, decided that Johnny should learn to play first base also.

But those big league days were still several years and a hundred times that many heartaches away. Hopp's first attempt to break into organized ball occurred in 1935 when he was eighteen years old. It consisted of a trip to Omaha and a tryout for that city's team in the Western League by Manager Joe McDermott, who was a scout for the Yankees. "A good prospect, but young and green,"

was McDermott's view of Johnny Hopp that day, but he did write a letter introducing him to the manager of the Lincoln team of the Nebraska State League. Johnny jumped to Lincoln with the letter. He was sent out to the outfield to shag flies for half an hour. He didn't even get a chance to bat. The tryout was a farce. Johnny went home.

He took a job in the State hospital and played on the ball team which represented that institution. Ten days later he received a letter from Ted Kisen, who was forming a semi-pro team in Carroll, Iowa. Would Johnny like to play ball for sixty dollars a month, plus board and room? Johnny would. He took a bus from Hastings to Carroll and played center field all that summer. "One day," Johnny reminisces, "we played a semi-pro team from Van Meter, Iowa. They had a young pitcher, fast and wild as a hawk. The first time I faced him, he struck me out. Next time I got him in a hole and slapped a three and one pitch for a hit. You've probably heard of that pitcher since. His name is Bobby Feller."

That was the sole highlight of Hopp's semi-pro experience, however, and a discouraged baseball player entered Hastings College that September of 1935 and turned to football. He played right halfback on the Hastings eleven that fall, and



made his full year's credits in his class work. But baseball still was in his blood and it boiled anew with spring.

Johnny did not go out for the college nine, but early in the season he received a letter from Joe McDermott, who had taken over the managerial reins of the Norfolk Elks club of the Nebraska State League. Johnny could have a contract calling for the same semi-pro salary of sixty dollars a month. He could make more than that working around Hastings during the summer months, but he sought his father's advice on what to do.

"Go ahead and play ball," said John Hopp, Sr. "That's what you want to do, isn't it?"

Johnny hit Class D pitching for an average of .361 that season, hit 26 home runs and drove in seventy runs. So what, you might ask? So nothing, except that one of those burrowing scouts for the St. Louis Cardinals feasted his eyes on the peppery little outfielder and sent in a recommendation—not that alone, but the best recommendation he had ever sent in on any young ball player—telling the Cardinals to get busy and get Johnny Hopp.

It was while Johnny was working on his winter-time job that the Cardinals' representatives first contacted him. Two men came into Hastings that winter of 1936-1937 and they found Johnny at

his dad's place of business. The Cardinals would offer Johnny \$150 a month to sign. Johnny, himself, liked the sound of that money, but his father was wiser.

"I can keep Cotney at home for that kind of money," he said. "He doesn't have to play ball."

Johnny signed for \$225 a month and was told to report to the Cards' Rochester farm team in the spring.

Two and three-quarters long seasons in the minor leagues were still ahead for Johnny Hopp. But they were years of happy memories. In his first season at the Rochester training camp he stole the show even from the veterans by hitting .450 in the exhibition games and convincing the Cardinals front office management that they had a real link in their chain gang, one that would pay off for the parent club in the near future. In the first game of the International League season that spring, Johnny had another thrill in store for him. The game was played in Jersey City and the occasion was the dedication of the new Roosevelt Stadium. The second time at bat, Johnny blasted a 400-foot home run to right field, the first ever hit in the new ball park.

There was a sadder day during that month of August, 1937, however, when Johnny slid into the

catcher while trying to score during a game with Montreal. As he bumped into the Royals' receiver, he felt a twinge of pain in his left arm, his throwing arm. But he forgot about it—forgot about it, that is, until he reported to the Cardinals' training camp the following spring and found that the sore arm, which had grown in pain through the winter, was his train ticket back to another season in the minor leagues.

He played that 1938 season once again with Rochester, but in 1939 Branch Rickey decided he wanted Johnny to learn the first base position as well as the outfield and sent him to another Cardinal farm, at Houston, in the Texas league. He played first base and he played it well. In mid-September the Cardinals called him up to the big league for the remainder of the season, and on a hot Texas day Johnny Hopp said good-bye to Houston and to minor league baseball for good. He was in the big show at last.

September was a memorable month in the life of the Hopp family that year. On Oct. 19, 1935, Johnny had married his schoolgirl sweetheart, Marian Simpson, and now they were expecting their first child. Johnny had to leave his wife behind in Houston, so that there was a note of sadness even on the great day of his entrance into the

big leagues. On Sept. 20th, however, the Cardinals were playing a close game with Brooklyn and in the sixth inning they managed to get men on second and third base when the amplifying system blasted forth the announcement:

"Attention, please. Hopp pinch-hitting for St. Louis. Hopp."

It was Johnny's first time at bat in the major leagues. He studied Hamlin carefully as he stepped into the batter's box. "He's just the same as those Texas League hurlers," he kept telling himself. And when Hamlin pitched, he proved it. He slammed a clean single out over second base, and drove in two runs for St. Louis.

After the game he walked into the Cardinals' clubhouse under the grandstand at Sportsman's Park. The clubhouse attendant greeted him. "It's a big day for you, Johnny," he smiled. "Just had a phone call from Texas. You're the father of a baby girl, and they're both doing fine."

The Hopps named their daughter Terrill. Another child, a son, Johnny Hopp III, was born in St. Louis, July 13, 1944.

There were many thrills ahead for Johnny Hopp in big league baseball after that first great day, and the biggest thrill he has ever known was playing in his first World Series game in the au-

tumn of 1942. "There has never been anything quite like that first day," the big league veteran will admit even today. "The crowds, the color and the knowledge that a fellow who played ball out in the back yard in Hastings was taking part in the big series—you can't beat it." Since then Johnny played in two other World Series, for the Cardinals were on their pennant parade for the three consecutive seasons of 1942, 1943 and 1944, but that first championship game against the Yankees is the one he will never forget.

Hopp does not believe his World Series days are over yet, however. He will quickly remind anyone who argues to the contrary that the Braves are building for the future.

There was another momentous day in the life of Johnny Hopp, the unseasonably warm day of February 5, 1946. Johnny had played golf that morning—he shoots in the high seventies and has since his days as a caddie—and when he returned home, there was the ominous message for him. "Call long distance, operator twenty-six at Boston." As soon as he saw that, Johnny knew what the message was. The call only confirmed his suspicions. He put down the phone when the call was ended.

"I've been sold to the Braves," he smiled to his

wife. "I'm going to stay with Billy Southworth."

That Hopp was pleased at the change was proven by his play during the 1946 season. Throughout his days with the Cardinals he had always been struggling to hold a regular berth, and there were discouraging days aplenty. During the season of 1940, he spent almost half the season on the St. Louis bench and was forced to divide his time between first base and the outfield when he did get into the outfield. In 1941 he played first base when Johnny Mize broke a thumb, but when Mize returned Hopp moved out to left field. In 1942 he had to fight to win the first base post away from a rookie, Red Sanders, but he finally won out in August and played at first base in the World Series against the Yankees.

It was during the 1943 season that Johnny received his biggest heartbreak and setback. With a gala year assured ahead of him, he suffered a back injury during a game in Cincinnati with the Reds and that kept him out of action for most of the season. In 1944 he showed what a true tragedy that had been, for he broke into the Cardinals' regular outfield, playing center field for the first time of his career, and he led the National League in fielding, making only one error in the 139 games in which he played. He also boasted the

high batting average of .336 and drove in seventy-two runs. In 1945 his batting average fell off somewhat to .289, but with the new life of his sale to Boston he perked up and hit .334 for the Braves, playing in 129 games.

With the Braves he was a standout. During the months of the mid-season he led the National League in batting, hitting as high as .383 over the course of a consistent streak, and his fielding was a sight to behold all season long. Hopp had only one complaint during the season of 1946. The Braves installed a lighting system at their beautiful ball park and Hopp is one of the bitterest opponents of night baseball. More correctly, he is opposed to the combination of night and day baseball, which upsets a player's routine of daily living and hampers his training. Hopp is convinced that night baseball, and more particularly the schedule of playing a night game tonight and a day game, or even a double-header, tomorrow, will cut short the active life of the ball player.

But for Johnny Hopp, himself, Boston fans foresee many more seasons of top-flight baseball. These Bostonians have seen their city completely captured by the Red Sox and the American League, but now a new fighting Braves management is battling to hang once again the banner of

the National League on high over "Beantown." They know that they must win a National League pennant to do it. They have designated Manager Billy Southworth as their field general in the battle, and Southworth, in turn, is building his strongest forces around Johnny Hopp.

To glance quickly through Hopp's record, you might ask how come? The figures back of Hopp's name are not those of an outstanding star of the game. But to look at the cotton-haired, chunky 175-pound pepperbox in action, at the plate, in the outfield, or, particularly, on the base paths is your answer. There is one item in the makeup of Johnny Hopp that lifts him high above mediocrity, up with the brightest stars of the game. Billy Southworth has summarized it best in five brief words. In one tiny sentence he summed up the greatness of Johnny Hopp. He did all that and more—he expressed much of his hopes for the future of his new ball club—when he said of Johnny Hopp,

"He's a heads-up ball player."



# JOHNNY HOPP

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## JOHN LEONARD HOPP

Born Hastings, Neb., July 18, 1916.

Bats left. Throws left. Height, 5 feet 9¾ inches.

Weight, 173 pounds.

| Year | Club      | Lea. <sup>7</sup> | Pos.  | G   | AB  | R   | H   | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|------|-----------|-------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1936 | Norfolk   | Neb. St.          | OF    | 107 | 446 | 134 | 161 | 26 | 79  | .361 |
| 1937 | Rochester | IL                | OF    | 141 | 527 | 87  | 162 | 9  | 69  | .307 |
| 1938 | Rochester | IL                | OF    | 124 | 371 | 73  | 111 | 9  | 48  | .299 |
| 1939 | Houston   | TL                | 1B    | 133 | 497 | 76  | 155 | 3  | 59  | .312 |
| 1939 | St. Louis | NL                | PH-1B | 6   | 4   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 2   | .500 |
| 1940 | St. Louis | NL                | 1B-OF | 80  | 152 | 24  | 41  | 1  | 14  | .270 |
| 1941 | St. Louis | NL                | 1B-OF | 134 | 445 | 83  | 135 | 4  | 50  | .303 |
| 1942 | St. Louis | NL                | 1B    | 95  | 314 | 41  | 81  | 3  | 37  | .258 |
| 1943 | St. Louis | NL                | 1B-OF | 91  | 241 | 33  | 54  | 2  | 25  | .224 |
| 1944 | St. Louis | NL                | 1B-OF | 139 | 527 | 106 | 177 | 11 | 72  | .336 |
| 1945 | St. Louis | NL                | 1B-OF | 124 | 446 | 67  | 129 | 3  | 44  | .289 |
| 1946 | Boston    | NL                | 1B-OF | 129 | 443 | 73  | 148 | 3  | 45  | .334 |

## WORLD SERIES RECORD

|      |           |    |    |   |    |   |   |   |   |      |
|------|-----------|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1942 | St. Louis | NL | 1B | 5 | 17 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | .176 |
| 1943 | St. Louis | NL | OF | 1 | 4  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 |
| 1944 | St. Louis | NL | OF | 6 | 27 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | .185 |



HOWARD HUGHES

*“Aviator and Sportsman”*





HOWARD HUGHES

*Wide World Photo*



## CHAPTER VIII

HOWARD HUGHES  
"AVIATOR AND SPORTSMAN"

THE principal difference between the fabulous Howard Hughes and the proverbial cat is that the cat has only nine lives. Hughes, one of the most extraordinary personalities in a fantastically exciting world, seems to have established some kind of a world's record for narrow escapes. He bears such a charmed life that, some time ago, during the course of his forty-odd years, he began living on borrowed time.

Howard Hughes is one of the great fliers and aviation specialists of all time, and, as if that were not enough, he is, perhaps, one of the most amazingly successful business men in America. He started life with a golden spoon in his mouth, and everything he undertakes—with the possible exception of marriage—has paid him off richly in fame and fortune.

For years, he was, and, for that matter, still is,

one of the most eligible bachelors in America. He was married once, but that union ended, after three years, in divorce. He has never been married since.

He has established all manner of flying speed records. His most publicized was a journey around the world in 1938 which took him 91 hours, 8 minutes, and had every civilized man, woman and child talking nothing but Howard Hughes for the flight's duration. This record was broken on April 16, 1947 when Milton Reynolds flew his "Bomb-shell" around the world over a course 5200 miles longer in 78 hours, 55 minutes. Both before and since, Howard Hughes was, and has been, one of the world's almost legendary characters.

He has cheated death so often that people the world over have taken for granted his chances of survival, no matter how badly he is injured. In July of 1946, he was so critically hurt when he took a plane of his own invention on a maiden flight and it crashed into a roof in Beverly Hills, California that even he himself practically gave up hope. Yet, on the day after the accident, in which he suffered third degree burns, multiple internal injuries, fractured skull and a punctured and collapsed lung, he met business associates in his hospital room, and so worried and harassed doctors



and nurses that they posted a guard at his door to keep further visitors at their distance. Three days later, he dictated to army officials a complete technical report of what happened in the accident, so that, in Hughes' words, "It won't happen again to somebody else." The next day, it was announced that Hughes was not expected to live through the night. Six weeks later, he was out of the hospital, as good—or almost as good—as new.

He is an inventor, designer, daredevil speed flier—a scientist who insists that, far from being a daredevil, he is only proving by demonstration what he plans in the laboratory. He has carried on his father's oil drill business successfully, and expanded it. He is one of the most radical movie producers in Hollywood, where he has taken one chance after another with unusually expensive pictures—and then sat back raking in the returns, literally hand over hand, receiving double value for his investment.

He has twice won the Clifford B. Harmon Trophy, for doing the most for aviation in a given year. He has won the Collier Trophy for outstanding performance in the air. He, or his pictures, or the directors or performers in his pictures, have collected so many Film Academy awards ("Oscars") that the count has long since been lost.

Howard Hughes is a tall, thin man, handsome, and, in spite of his many accidents, looking far less than the middle age which he has recently entered. He is, from his estimated 25,000 plane takeoffs and landings and his thousands upon thousands of hours in the air, more than slightly deaf, and hence, shy when he meets strangers. He will do anything or try anything, not for the sake of doing or trying it, but for the sake of proving it can be done—if he sees an outside chance of success.

That has been the motif of Howard Hughes' entire life. While the world of aviation, the glittering world of Hollywood and the world of business sees only long chances in Hughes' undertakings, the man himself is always confident that the chances are not long, and that, if an undertaking has a chance at all, he can capitalize on it. Contrary to popular belief, he will not try anything if he sees no chance whatever for its success.

He is patient beyond conception. He spends hours in his laboratory with scientific experiments leading towards aviation improvements—the kind of experiments which have led to the building of scores of radical type planes, including the Lockheed Lightning, which helped to win the war, and the great Constellation plane, which has made

arterial highways of oceans and next-door neighbors of hemispheres.

He spent a million and a half dollars on a Hollywood extravaganza called "Hell's Angels" back in the late 'twenties and, when the silent pictures went out and the talkies came in, he scrapped it all and spent over a million and a half more re-making it because his silent star had a heavy accent and could not be used at the time in a voice picture. And then he made a jeering Hollywood gasp when he not only received his three million back, but millions more in profits.

Time and time again, he has judged the pulse of the movie-going nation with unerring accuracy, making pictures on controversial subjects which, by being discussed, rediscussed, banned in some places, acclaimed in others, has won him and his pictures the kind of publicity which movie executives could not glean at any price.

This fabulous man was born Howard Robard Hughes, son of a father of the same name, in Houston, Texas, on Christmas Eve in either 1904, 1905 or 1906. The mixup in dates is characteristic of the mystic qualities of the man involved. In "Who's Who in America," the year of his birth is listed as 1904. In records in Houston, it is listed as

1905. But his late father, who should have known, always claimed that Howard was born in 1906, and that the Houston listing of 1905 was a clerk's error.

Howard R. Hughes, Senior, was president and founder of the Hughes Tool Company. The father, a brother of Rupert Hughes, the well-known author, developed and, through his company, exploited a rock drilling bit for oil wells, and, from the business, he acquired a large fortune, all of which was left to the son.

The junior Hughes, long before he was old enough to handle his own affairs, was, as a boy, fascinated by the possibilities in aviation. He flew for the first time when he was about fifteen during the period immediately following the first World War, when flying itself was a daring, life-risking venture. He liked it so much that, soon, he flew solo for the first time, and he received a pilot's license before he was twenty-one.

When his mother died in 1921, Hughes went to California with his father, after first having attended, for a year or two, the Fessenden School just outside of Boston. Hughes, Senior, went to the west coast at the behest of his brother Rupert, who was involved in the movie-making business, and Howard's father intended to make pictures

himself. However, early in 1923, just before he was to launch his first film venture, the elder Hughes died suddenly, and the son, an orphan at about eighteen, went back to Houston, after having attended California Technical School for a year.

In the winter of 1923-1924, Hughes went to Rice Institute. When he was nineteen, he showed so much aptitude and common sense that he was able to arrange to take charge of his father's estate, estimated at somewhere in the neighborhood of five million dollars. While in Houston, he married Ella Rice, member of the Rice Institute family, prominent socially, and, in 1925, he took her back to California. That union went on the rocks, and the couple were divorced three years later. It was the only failure in Howard Hughes' entire life.

He made two pictures, one of which, "The Front Page," brought Pat O'Brien to Hollywood from the Broadway stage, and O'Brien has been there ever since. Then, in 1927, Hughes decided that the time had come for a film extravaganza that would exploit aviation, and he began making preparations for the movie classic, "Hell's Angels."

There was probably no other man in Hollywood who would have attempted the venture. Veteran

producers and directors laughed at Hughes' efforts to put on the screen the story of the fliers of the first World War. The expense of purchasing planes alone was staggering, but Hughes had the money, was willing to risk it and that, plus his imagination, gave him the essential qualities for the making of such a film.

He engaged an expensive cast, and picked Greta Nissen as the heroine. It was during the making of the picture, which took, altogether, about three years, that Hughes was bitten hopelessly by an aviation bug which has infected him ever since. It was also during the making of this picture that he had the first of a long series of miraculous escapes from plane crashes.

He had collected all conceivable types of old World War planes for use in the picture. Many of them were "crates," death-traps, which had become no safer with the passing of the years. Ben Lyon, one of the actors in the film, and an aviation enthusiast himself, was looking at one of the old planes which was to be used in the picture, when Hughes came over and said, "I dare you to fly that thing."

Lyon shook his head.

"No," he said, "I don't think I'll try it. Would you?"

"Certainly," replied Hughes.

He stepped into the plane, circled around the lot, suddenly lost control, and the old ship turned heavily earthward, smoke bellowing out from its tail.

While a horrified cast gasped in terror, the thing hit the ground and split apart—and Howard Hughes, unscathed, calmly walked out of it.

"Hell's Angels" took so long to film that the picture became a Hollywood laughing stock. During the course of its making, Hughes purchased a German Zeppelin, had it shipped to New York and then went east and flew it to the west coast for use in the picture.

A year and a half after he started, plus the investment of a million and a half dollars Hughes finally completed production, only to find that, in the meantime, talking pictures had arrived. His star could not be used in a talking version of the picture at that time.

So, calmly, and completely oblivious to the advice of experienced Hollywood movie-makers, he scrapped the whole thing and started all over again. This time, for his heroine, he chose the late Jean Harlow, although, contrary to popular belief, he was neither her discoverer nor the inventor of the catch phrase, "platinum blonde," which made

her famous and started a world-wide vogue, which, to this day, has not ended. It took him almost two years to complete the picture. He poured a million and a half more into it and, when it finally was released, in late 1930, it was a smash hit from the start. Hughes got all of his money back, and realized a handsome profit.

Pat O'Brien and Jean Harlow were only two of the great movie stars who owed their success in Hollywood to Hughes. Louis Wolheim and Director Lewis Milestone won Academy Awards with Hughes' "Two Arabian Nights." Hughes won another "Oscar" with "The Racket." He brought such stars as George Raft and Ann Dvorak and a host of others to the film capital and made them famous. It was he who persuaded the great Paul Muni to leave the New York stage and go into the business of starring in pictures.

Hughes was about twenty-five when he first went into picture making. After he had completed "Hell's Angels," he went seriously into the business of aviation. He first won world-wide attention in 1935, when, on a special course in southern California, he was clocked at 352.46 miles per hour, smashing all speed records for land planes up to that time. The flight ended in a crack-up,



with the plane in flames, but Hughes stepped out of the machine without a scratch.

By 1936, he had made aviation his chief interest. In January of that year, he flew from Burbank, California to Newark, New Jersey in 9 hours, 27 minutes, 10 seconds, to break the old west-east transcontinental record of 10 hours, 01 minute, 51 seconds, which had been set by the veteran flyer, Roscoe Turner, in 1933. In April, Hughes flew from Miami to Newark in 4 hours, 21 minutes, 32 seconds, another record at that time. In May, he came close to a record by flying from Chicago to Los Angeles (Burbank) in 8 hours, 15 minutes, 25 seconds.

For his 1936 aviation achievements, Hughes was awarded the Harmon Trophy for having done the most for aviation in 1936. The prize was presented to him in New York, and, when he went to receive it, he smashed his own west-east cross-country record by flying from Burbank to Newark in 7 hours, 28 minutes, 25 seconds. That was in January of 1937.

That trip nearly cost Hughes his life again. He was flying a new plane, and testing new oxygen equipment. Far above the clouds over Arizona, he suddenly realized that he was losing conscious-

ness from lack of oxygen. He jammed an oxygen tube into his mouth, dived the plane down to a height of 15,000 feet and, just as he was certain that he was well on his way towards choking to death, revived. He arrived in Newark none the worse for his experience, and stepped out of the plane with a smile on his face and a few additional items of knowledge in his head concerning the use of oxygen in flight.

Hughes continued to experiment, study, fly and, in between times, make pictures for the next eighteen months. In the meantime, he had been toying with the idea of attempting to break the speed record for flying around the world, established in 1933 by the late Wiley Post, who, in company with the late Will Rogers, lost his life in a plane crash in Alaska.

At the same time, Hughes was thinking seriously about the possibilities of trans-oceanic transport plane service. His vision and imagination and money eventually was poured into the making of the great Constellation plane, which today is in regular use in flights over the world's oceans.

The world flight, however, captured Hughes' imagination, and he decided to design and build what he hoped would become the fastest, long-

range transport plane in the world. He completed the job early in 1938, and then went to New York to begin preparations for the history-making voyage.

He selected four men to go with him on the trip. As navigators, he picked Lieutenant Thomas A. Thurlow, on leave from the United States army air corps, and Harry P. Connor, on leave from the Department of Commerce. He chose Richard N. Stoddart as radio engineer and Edward Lund as flight engineer. Hughes planned to take the controls of the big ship himself.

Amid a tremendous fanfare of world-wide publicity, Hughes and his associates took off on the epoch flight in July of 1938, from the Newark airport, with Paris as their first scheduled stop. The combined bated breath of an anxious world which followed the flight was comparable only to the anxiety which accompanied Charles A. Lindbergh when he flew solo from New York to Paris in 1927.

Radios the world over were tuned in to newscasters who told, as much as they could, all the details of the trip as it progressed. At first, the reports were slim, but, once over Europe, the plane was continually spotted. From the ship it-

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self came, from time to time, reports by Stoddart, but there were occasions, especially on the first leg of the flight when it was impossible to pick up the plane's radio broadcasts.

The five travellers obtained their rest in flight. Not once did they stop for longer than it took for refuelling. They lived on sandwiches and coffee, and, with virtually no delays, winged their way around the globe. From Paris, they headed for Moscow. From there, they went to Omsk in Russia. The next point of call was Yabutsh, in Siberia. Then they went to Fairbanks, Alaska, then to Minneapolis and then, finally, with one of the greatest crowds in history waiting to welcome them, they landed back at the starting point in Newark.

The time of the trip, figured to the second, was 3 days, 19 hours, 8 minutes, 6 seconds. It smashed the old 1933 Wiley Post record of 7 days, 18 hours, 49 minutes, 30 seconds, for a similar world-girdling flight.

Led by Hughes, the fliers were given an old-fashioned parade and reception through the streets of New York City. From Hughes down, they were heroes. Yet, while they all made the flight, the inspiration for it, the money, the energy, the imagination and the piloting itself was done by the

fabulous young man who could not seem to make a mistake.

Hughes, shy as he was, had no time for the adulation of the millions the country over who wanted to honor him. Immediately following the New York reception, he went back to California, and, less than a month after he had completed the world trip by air, he was in the aviation record books again.

This time, he tried for and as usual succeeded in breaking the west-east transcontinental record for transport planes. Testing a new oxygen mask, which, he said later, was the principal purpose of the trip, he flew from Glendale, California, to New York in 10 hours, 34 minutes, breaking a four-year old record of 11 hours, 5 minutes, set in 1934 by Thomas Tomlinson.

For his 1938 achievements, he won the Harmon Trophy again. For his world flight, he won the Collier Trophy. And, for the same flight, he won a special United States government prize, a medal, on one side of which was struck his profile and, on the other side, an outline of his mapped route. Curiously enough, because of the fact that this award had to be voted by Congress and because of delays, due to war shortages, he did not actually receive this medal until August of 1946, when

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President Harry Truman personally sent it to Hughes while he was recovering from the accident which again nearly cost him his life.

That mishap came as a direct result of Hughes' tireless efforts to find new aviation worlds to conquer. He had designed a fast craft called an XF-11 photographic plane. He decided to test it in the Los Angeles area, and he took off from Burbank. A few minutes later, while going at terrific speed, he lost control and the plane smashed into a house roof in Beverly Hills, ricocheted off, crashed into another roof top and then dropped, flaming, to the ground.

Hughes, somehow, climbed out, in spite of his painful multiple injuries, and was taken to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Culver City, California, where doctors refused, at first, to believe that he could have survived such a crash. They gave him hours to live, but, as noted above, he not only laughed at death again, but he entertained business associates in his room twenty-four hours after the crash, and army officials a few days later.

He has been in dozens of plane crashes, including one in 1943 in Colorado, which resulted in the death of one of his flying mates and serious injuries to two others. That time, Hughes walked away completely uninjured.

Ironically enough, he was slightly injured in an automobile crash in 1940 in California, but, other than that, his only escapes from the Grim Reaper have been from air accidents.

During the war, Hughes was busy turning out and designing planes of all types for service use. Immediately following the end of the war, he crashed into the newspapers the country over with a terrific controversy over his picture "The Outlaw," and the court fights concerning the picture were still going on in the latter part of 1946. Despite this fact, the picture, which was expensive to make, has made money for Hughes.

The last of Hughes has not been heard from yet. Sooner or later, he will break out with another amazing film, or jump into the news with another aviation record. He may be in more plane wrecks, but the odds go higher every year that Howard Hughes will live to a ripe old age and die a natural death.

His latest venture is the 750-passenger flying boat, The Hercules, which he hopes will fly its maiden voyage in 1947.

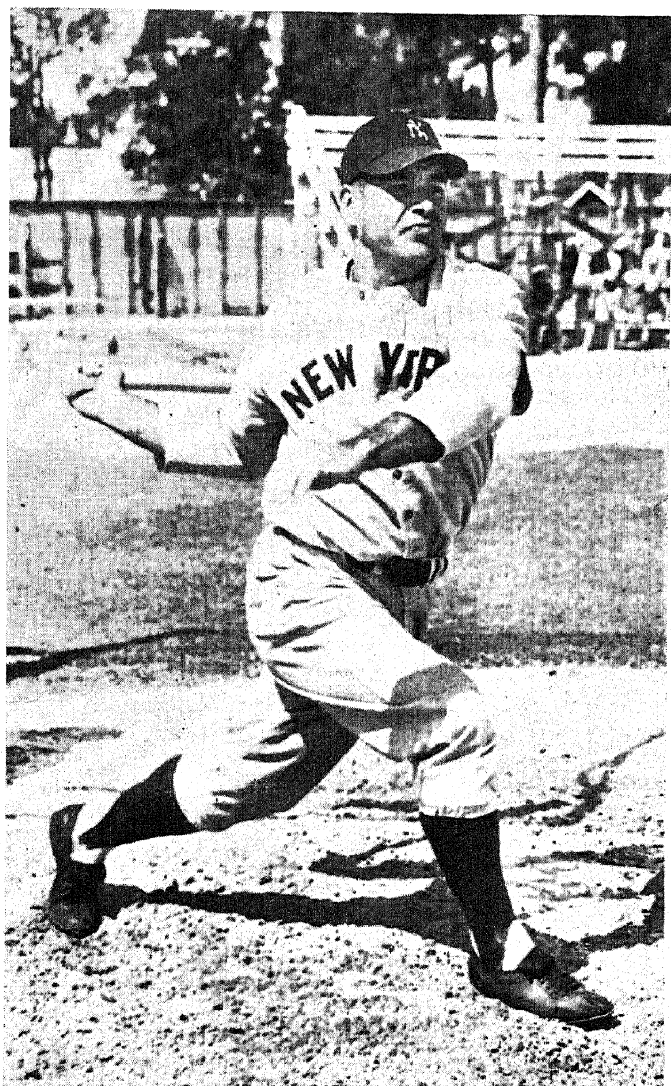




CHARLES ERNEST (KING KONG)  
KELLER

*“Crown Prince of Swat”*





CHARLES ERNEST (KING KONG) KELLER



## CHAPTER IX

CHARLES ERNEST (KING KONG) KELLER  
"CROWN PRINCE OF SWAT"

THE advent of Charlie Keller of outfield fame to the "House That Ruth Built" marked the beginning of a new era in the fabulous history of the New York Yankees. The Babe had gone and with him had gone Bob Meusel, Herb Pennock, Waite Hoyte, Benny Bengough and Joe Dugan. Earl Combs' playing days had been ended by his crash into the center field wall. George Pipgras was now an umpire and Art Fletcher was an assistant to Joe McCarthy.

Even Jake Ruppert, the Yankees' owner, had passed away in January and the tragic end of Lou Gehrig was but a year away.

Names like DiMaggio, Selkirk, and Gordon had replaced "Murderers' Row" and although they were not nearly so colorful many contended that they were just as capable.

Manager Joe McCarthy had made few changes in the roster that winter of 1939. He had traded

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Hoag and Joe Glenn for Hilderbrand, and Charlie Keller, the celebrated Maryland country boy, had been brought up from Newark.

Such was the picture as the Yankees boarded their special train for St. Petersburg in March.

Gehrig was not hitting in the South—at least the way Gehrig used to hit—and the New York scribes were writing enthusiastically about this twenty-two-year-old youngster who had set the International League afire in his only two seasons of professional baseball. Physically he was all that a baseball Atlas should be. He stood five feet eight inches tall and carried his 180 pounds easily. In his first year at Newark, fresh from the campus of the University of Maryland, he led the league in hitting, .353, and had been named by the *Sporting News* as the outstanding player of the year—and he had not yet reached his twenty-first birthday. His second year was even more successful. He hit .365.

Charles Ernest Keller was born on September 12, 1916, at Middletown, Maryland, a small banking-post village of several hundred people, eight miles outside the city of Frederick in the fertile Catoctin Valley near the east base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Born of German parents, Keller was blessed with perfect grey eyes that enabled

him to achieve uncanny skill as a hunter at an age when most boys are shooting marbles. His enthusiasm for the sport remains today, and at the end of each baseball season he returns to the hunting regions of Frederick where he lives with his wife, the former Martha Lee Williamson, whom he married in 1938.

He received a bachelor of science degree from the University of Maryland in 1938 and it was while he was playing on the college nine that he was discovered by Yankee scouts. The story goes that the scouts had been attracted to the University in search of a pitcher who had been highly recommended. One look at Keller and they forgot the pitcher.

Keller was burning up the Grapefruit League and his consistency at bouncing the ball off the outfield walls caused the veterans on the Yankee squad to gasp. Yet they remained skeptical, for many a rookie had played brilliantly on the winter training tour only to collapse in awe of the huge crowds and stadiums in major league cities. Nevertheless the Yanks watched with interest whenever Keller took his place in the batting cage and they heckled him, as they heckle all rookies, about his ability, and anything else that came to mind.

Because of his short powerful frame he won the nickname "King Kong," and the fun-loving Lefty Gomez is credited with the remark, "He's the first player to be brought back by 'Bring 'Em Back Alive' Frank Buck."

The Yankees came north to open the campaign but all was not harmony in the ranks. Gehrig was the reason. Old-timers could not picture the Yanks winning without Lou's bat showing the way, and he already was suffering from the fatal malady that later was to be diagnosed as a chronic form of infantile paralysis. This mental slump had its effect on the club and the reaction of veterans was passed down to the newcomers, Keller included.

Sensing this, Gehrig voluntarily benched himself after eight games of play and to the surprise of all concerned the Yanks were still able to win ball games without the Ironman on first. Gradually Charlie Keller became an accepted reason why the Yankees were winning and on May 11 they moved into first place.

They were the Yankees of old now, and freshman Charlie Keller was keeping the pace. In one game the Yankees pounded out thirteen home runs and although Keller did not figure in this barrage he played a major role in the Yanks' romp to



the pennant, finishing his first season in the American League with eleven home runs and a batting average of .334. They easily won the American League pennant and were matched with the Cincinnati Reds in the World Series.

Some of the greatest ball players have collapsed in the annual fall classic, Ty Cobb and Ted Williams notwithstanding. But Charlie Keller, in his first year of major league baseball, was destined to become the hero of the 1939 Series and to steal the glory away from the more highly publicized Joe DiMaggio.

The morning following the first game the public heard about Charlie Keller in a Hollywood way. Streamer headlines, reserved by newspapers for news events of majestic importance, blared forth the news of Charlie Keller's game winning feat. "ROOKIE GIVES YANKS FIRST VICTORY, 2-1," said a leading Boston paper, and in smaller type, "Keller's Triple in the Ninth Paves Way for Defeat of Reds."

The score was deadlocked at 1-1 going into the ninth when Keller caught hold of the first pitch tossed him by Paul Derringer and walloped it to the 407-foot mark in center field. After Joe DiMaggio was intentionally passed, Bill Dickey scored Keller with a single to center.

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The Yanks won the second game, 4-0.

The scene of the third game was shifted to Crosley Field, Cincinnati, and again King Kong stole the show, this time hitting two home runs. Normally a straightaway left-handed hitter Keller altered his stance to drive two balls into the right field stands 366 feet from home plate.

In the dressing room following the game sports writers besieged him with the question about how he had accomplished the feat. His exceptional modesty was revealed by his simple answer, "I just swung."

The Yanks won the fourth game, 7-4, to become the first team in World Series history to win four successive pennants. Once more Charlie Keller found himself a principal in an unforgettable World Series incident. It was the so-called "Ernie Lombardi snooze."

In the tenth inning with the score deadlocked at 4-4, Crosetti walked to open the inning and was advanced to second by Rolfe. Keller hit a bouncer over shortstop which Meyers, playing that position for Cincinnati, allowed to get away. DiMaggio followed with a single to center field, and on the play the ball escaped from Goodman, the fielder. Keller rounding third saw his chance to score and streaked for the plate. Goodman threw

to McCormick who threw to home but Keller slid safely past Lombardi who lost the ball. Then while DiMaggio also proceeded to come home, Lombardi stood by bewildered and allowed him to cross without even making the play.

Thus had Charlie Keller encountered his first World Series and passed with flying colors. He became the toast of the baseball world and his amazing World Series record stood as an inspiration for future players. He had batted .438, the magic figure set by Hughie Duffy during the season of 1894 and which never since has been equalled. He drove in six runs, three of them home runs.

Perhaps the greatest tribute paid a ball player was given Keller when the cry, "Break up the Yankees" swept the country like a tidal wave. Upon hearing the suggestion one dejected Cincinnati fan replied, "Break up the Yankees, nothing. Just break up Keller."

Here is the phenomenal record of Keller as it appears in the 1939 World Series box score:

|   |    |   |   |    |    |    |     |    |    |      |    |   |   |       |
|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|-----|----|----|------|----|---|---|-------|
| G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | BB | SO | PCT. | PO | A | E | PCT.  |
| 4 | 16 | 8 | 6 | 1  | 1  | 3  | 6   | 1  | 2  | .438 | 6  | 0 | 0 | 1.000 |

A letdown was due to come and it came in 1940. Potentially the team was as strong as the year be-

fore. DiMaggio, Keller, and Henrich were in the outfield. Gordon was at first base. Priddy and Rizzuto formed the keystone combination and the pitching staff remained about the same. Yet the Yanks missed the mental lift and the other seven teams in the League were gaining on them. They did find their stride in August, but it was too late.

Charlie Keller fell with them. His batting average sank forty-eight points, from .334 to .286, an unusual reversal of form for any ball player, particularly when that player's previous year was so sensational. He did have one day that season that he probably will remember the rest of his life. That was July 28, 1940, in the first game of a double-header when he hit three home runs, one up on Joe DiMaggio who hit two in the same game, to win a 10-9 slugging duel against the White Sox.

That same season Lou Gehrig died and Joe DiMaggio's string of hitting successfully in fifty-six consecutive games was broken.

But the Yankees were never known to stay down and they came off the floor the next summer and despite the efforts of Ted Williams and the Red Sox they roared right back in 1941 to win the pennant and the right to play the Dodgers in the

World Series. By now you would expect Charlie Keller to play a major role in anything concerning the Yankees, and he did.

With the Dodgers as opponents almost anything could be expected and the late Judge Landis warned that he would tolerate no funny business. In the final game Keller was to play a part in Mickey Owen's dropping of a third strike, the result of which will be remembered as long as World Series are played.

The Yanks were trailing in the top of the ninth, 4-3, two were out, and the Flatbush faithful were pouring towards the Ebbets Field exits convinced that Leo Durocher "had won this one." Then it happened! With the count three and two on Tommy Henrich, Hugh Casey, the Brooklyn pitcher, let fly what he expected to be the final pitch of the game and although it was a strike Owen let the ball get away from him and Henrich was safe on first. Then followed one of the greatest rallies in baseball history and Charlie Keller was the fatal punch to Brooklyn hopes.

Joe DiMaggio was the next batter up and he greeted Casey, by this time unnerved, with a single into left field, advancing Henrich and placing the tying and winning runs on base. Charlie Kel-

ler came to bat, and due to a chip fracture of the right ankle sustained two weeks before the Series his batting to date had been weak.

Charlie was swinging from his ankles and he missed the two pitches completely. Instead of working on Keller, Casey decided he would throw it right down the middle and Keller connected with all his 180 pounds. The ball soared to the right field wall and missed being a home run by a fraction of a foot. But the hit was all that was needed to give the Yankees the game and the World Series, and establish Mickey Owen as one of the more prominent goats of all time.

By the time the Yankees had won their next pennant in 1942 King Kong had long enjoyed the reputation as a "money player," which means in baseball lingo that a player is at his best when the chips are down. Obviously a player of this type is of much greater value than a better player who tightens up in crucial positions.

The 1942 Series was a lost cause for the American League and the St. Louis Cardinals swept through the Yankees in five games. But it was not before Keller, for the third time in as many Series had been the most dangerous hitter in the Yankee batting order.

In the eighth inning of the second game his two-

run homer tied the score although the Cards went on to win, and in the sixth inning of the fourth game Keller came to bat in a similar situation with Roy Cullenbine on first base. Big Mort Cooper's second pitch was a fast breaking curve, much like that disastrous pitch served Keller two days before by Johnny Beazley, and it landed in the right field stands 25 rows of seats high.

Again in 1943 Keller found himself in the World Series, the fourth in five years of major league baseball, an unusual note because some veterans have not so much as played in one during their entire career. For once Keller was not the hero, but the ball he topped into right field in the fifth game proved to be the winning run of the game and the Series. Bill Dickey homered to score him and give the Yanks a 2-0 victory.

When the 1944 season came along even a Yankee fan would hardly recognize the lineup and among the missing was Charles Ernest Keller who by this time was serving in the Merchant Marine. He returned from the war in time to play the 1945 season and apparently the Service had claimed none of his ability for he batted .301. In 1946 his average was a mediocre .276, but he drove in more than 101 runs and hit thirty home runs.

Charlie Keller is a ball player's player. Seldom

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in the limelight, never one known to stray from the Book of Life, he takes his business as a ball player as seriously as a doctor or lawyer takes his profession. A keen student of the game he improves his natural ability by continual attention to the game. He may never enjoy the sensational publicity accorded other great stars, but as one Yankee fan expressed it, "Give me Keller when the chips are down."

### CHARLES ERNEST KELLER

Born Middletown, Md., September 12, 1916.

Bats left. Throws right. Height, 5 feet 10 inches.

Weight, 190 pounds.

| Year  | Club     | Lea. | Pos. | G   | AB  | R   | H   | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|---|----------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1937  | Newark   | IL   | OF   | 145 | 536 | 120 | 189 | 13 | 88  | .353 |
| 1938  | Newark   | IL   | OF   | 150 | 578 | 149 | 211 | 22 | 129 | .365 |
| 1939  | New York | AL   | OF   | 111 | 398 | 87  | 133 | 11 | 83  | .334 |
| 1940  | New York | AL   | OF   | 138 | 500 | 102 | 143 | 21 | 93  | .286 |
| 1941  | New York | AL   | OF   | 140 | 507 | 102 | 151 | 33 | 122 | .298 |
| 1942  | New York | AL   | OF   | 152 | 544 | 106 | 159 | 26 | 108 | .292 |
| 1943  | New York | AL   | OF   | 141 | 513 | 97  | 139 | 31 | 86  | .271 |
| 1944—(In the United States Merchant Marine) |          |      |      |     |     |     |     |    |     |      |
| 1945  | New York | AL   | OF   | 44  | 163 | 26  | 49  | 10 | 34  | .301 |
| 1946  | New York | AL   | OF   | 150 | 539 | 98  | 149 | 30 | 101 | .276 |

### WORLD SERIES RECORD

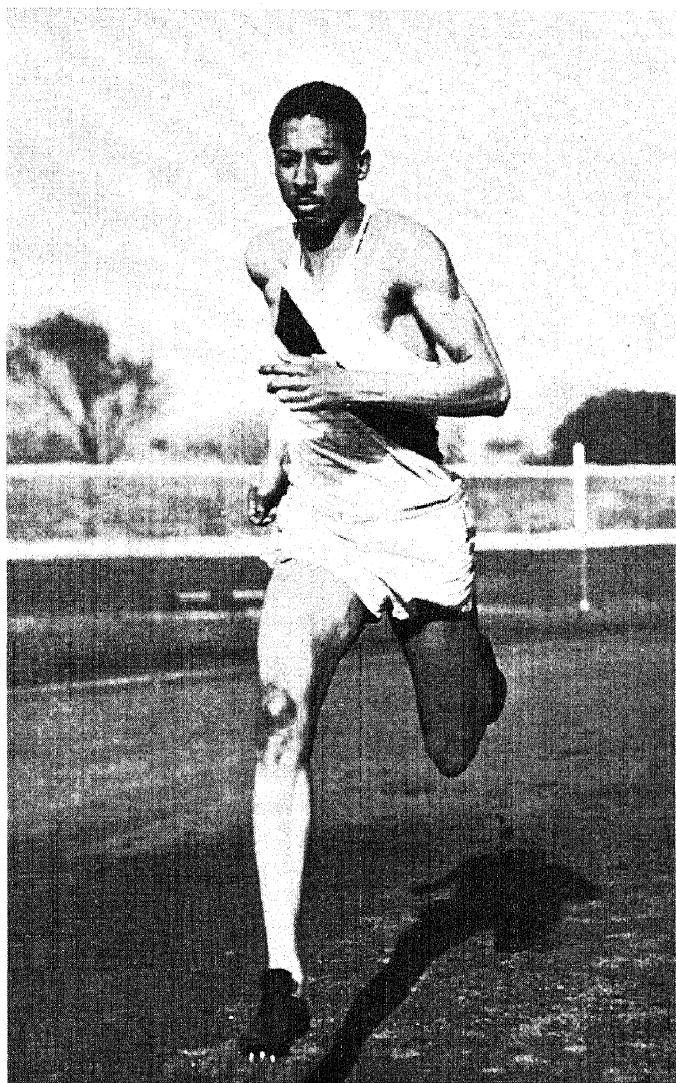
|      |          |    |    |   |    |   |   |   |   |      |
|------|----------|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1939 | New York | AL | OF | 4 | 16 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 6 | .438 |
| 1941 | New York | AL | OF | 5 | 18 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 5 | .389 |
| 1942 | New York | AL | OF | 5 | 20 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 | .200 |
| 1943 | New York | AL | OF | 5 | 18 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 | .222 |



HERBERT HENRY (HERB)  
McKENLEY

*“Manufactured Sprinter”*





HERBERT HENRY (HERB) MCKENLEY



## CHAPTER X

HERBERT HENRY (HERB) MCKENLEY  
"MANUFACTURED SPRINTER"

THERE were only a few spectators in bowl-shaped Randall's Island Stadium on Tuesday afternoon, the second day of July, 1946, for track is no longer the sport of tremendous crowd appeal that once it was. But what few eyes were there that day were the eyes of experts and they were concentrated solely on the lanky bronzed body of Herb McKenley, warming up in a dark sweatsuit with the golden-lettered boast, "ILLINOIS," written loudly across his chest. This was a special meet, run by the Amateur Athletic Union as a farewell to Lennart Strand, the Swedish miler, who was returning to his homeland following his first conquest of America's best. But the sprinkled spectators were less interested in the guest of honor than in seeing the new sensation of their happy little world that is bounded on the North by record-breaking performances and on the South by cinders.

Little more than a month before Herb McKenley had carried himself and the feathery weight of his track suit over 440 yards in just 46.2 seconds, one of those world records that suddenly shines as a spotlight upon a runner who, otherwise, would merely be a great unknown. Now he was jogging beneath the sun over Randall's Island, warming up for an attempt to break the long-standing world mark for 300-yard dash. This was a special invitation race with the fundamental idea of assault and battery on and elimination of the mark of 30.2 seconds for the distance set by Charley Paddock twenty-five years previously. Beside McKenley jogged another great sprinter, Elmore Harris of New Jersey, Herb's keenest rival since his arrival in the United States from his West Indian home on the Island of Jamaica less than four outdoor track seasons before. They jogged in step like soldiers marching at the double. Their arms moved up and down in jaunty unison. And they whispered corner-mouthed threats to one another, while the spectators argued loudly among themselves as to the merits of the two men under their scrutiny.

"The one who wins this race will have to run 29.9," taunted Harris to Herb.

"Don't let me scare you away," replied McKen-

ley. "But I'm going to do better than that this time."

McKenley was not boasting in foolhardy fashion. Never before in his brief career had he felt more like running than he did on this hot July afternoon. None of the headaches, the deep-stomach nausea, the cramps or the pesky little injuries, which had plagued him before other races, was there to bother him this day. This was to be the biggest day of his life. He was going to put an exclamation point back of that world quarter-mile record by adding another world mark to his laurels. If that first record had spotlighted him as one of the truly great runners of the era, those 300 yards ahead of him, yet to be run, would establish him as one of the mighty champions of all time. This, he was certain, was his day.

The happy thought gave added life to his lanky legs and he loped away from Harris to complete his warming up alone. He strode a final few yards along the track. This long fellow was poetry in motion and the eyes of the experts followed him with rapt attention. "Look at McKenley," said one of the officials for the benefit of all within ear-shot. "There's a fellow who was born to be a great runner."

A falser word perhaps never was spoken.

Herb McKenley could recall the days of his youth—days when a gangling, oversized boy could not keep up with the speed of his playmates as they ran at their games over the hot dusty roads and the steaming fields of the tiny island of Jamaica, which the Lord had placed as an underline beneath Cuba in the Caribbean Sea. Born to run? This boy hated to run, for when he did his own legs twined in his way and his friends laughed at him and jeered at him with the Jamaican child's equivalent to clumsy "Slowpoke."

Herb, of course, could not recall an earlier day—July 10, 1922 on the calendar—when there was a flurry of excitement in the only two-story house in the city of May Pen, a teeming community of 50,000 population in the parish of Clarendon in the very central part of the island. Even Christmas in May Pen is annually a hot and blistering day. On this July afternoon the sun burned down like a coal from a torrid furnace. The remainder of the city went about its siesta and the noonday quiet reigned, but in the home of the city's leading physician, Dr. Alexander G. McKenley, a baby boy was born with complete disregard for the heat or the daily period of rest.

For Dr. McKenley and his wife, Zilpha, the baby was their first and only child, and they named



him Herbert Henry McKenley. The doctor was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh and with pardonable paternal pride he immediately declared that Herbert would follow his footsteps through Scotland's famed university and one day be a famous surgeon of the world. Later, as the neighbors paid their visits, they predicted equally important things for the baby who would grow to be a man. But none thought to say that he would one day be a track champion, and, indeed, as the years passed, they would have laughed at themselves to have so prophesied.

It was not until he was fourteen years old—in March of 1937—that Herb McKenley ever tried to run in competition, and then it took a dare to make him compete. In his boyhood his father had hired a private tutor to care for Herb's education, but the boy had been lonely and asked to go to public school. "Anything you want, Herbert," said Dr. McKenley to his son for the first of many, many times, and Herb left on the forty mile journey to the capital at Kingston to enter the Micho Practising School for his early education. On graduation he entered the Calobar High School, which was nearest to the home of his aunt with whom he lived in Kingston during school terms.

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In Jamaican high schools, the students are divided into "houses," similar to American college fraternities. At Calobar there were three houses, named Sparta House, Rome and Troy, and Herb McKenley was elected as a Spartan. Each March the houses competed in a track meet for the championship of the school, and in March of 1937 Herb McKenley was asked by his fellow Spartans to run in the quarter mile. "There will only be five in the race," said the spokesman with a grin, "and fifth place means one point. We can use it in our total." Herb grinned in return and agreed.

The day of that meet was the day that Herb McKenley ran the longest quarter mile of his life; it was, he suspects, the longest quarter mile in all history. The race was run on a grass track and the grandstand that day was filled with two thousand cheering students of Calobar. They laughed at Herb as he fell behind the field of four other runners, but they remained to cheer him as he staggered gamely across the finish line, completing all of the 440 yards though each one after the first seventy-five nearly killed him. And the point he won meant the school championship for Sparta House, for when the totals were tallied they had defeated Rome by one lone point.

When Herb heard this news, he was just recovering from the nausea which attacked him at the finish line. "Good—(puff)—good," responded Herb McKenley, one day to be the quarter-mile champion of all the world, at the news, "but—(puff)—I'll never run again. (Puff.) Never!" He added a puff for good measure.

The laughter of his schoolmates lived longer than their cheers in the memory of Herb McKenley. It preyed upon his thoughts and his athletic ambitions, so he hid in a shell of studies taking part in none of the games at Calobar, although he had proven a fair performer at cricket and soccer up to that time. In January, 1938, a school edict that every student must take part in some athletics caught up with him, and he was forced into an after-school class in compulsory physical education. It was then that the first of many architects, who played a part in the construction of a champion, became acquainted with Herb McKenley. He was Frank Laing, the physical director and coach of track at Calobar High School, Kingston, Jamaica, British West Indies.

Mark well that name, for you will find it nowhere in the record books that now proudly boast McKenley's feats, yet this stocky little ex-pole vaulter must have had eyes as discerning as an

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X-ray machine and patience as profound as the Caribbean, herself. In the odd mixture of fat and lean, the physical misfits of that compulsory class, he spotted the lanky McKenley as an athlete.

"You should be a runner," he remarked to Herb one afternoon after the class had been dismissed. But Herb only grinned and related the sad story of his slowpoke boyhood.

Laing was not satisfied and he ordered Herb to report for the school track team. "I think I can make a runner out of you," he said, and McKenley found that by the word "make" the coach actually meant long hours of exercise under the hot sun; endless mornings and afternoons of jogging and pushups, of squats and deep knee bends, until Herb's gangly legs began to know the control of muscles. Then came longer hours of drill in the important sidelights of running, the start, breathing and all the countless little things that must be kept in perfect control during the short seconds of a sprint.

Finally, Laing gave Herb the nod. "You're going to run in the house meet next week," he said. "You'll need a pair of track shoes, because you're going to win."

Track shoes were one thing Herb McKenley had never dreamed he would have use for, but

now he wrote to his father in May Pen to tell him of his latest need. And with the necessary money by return mail came Dr. McKenley's constant answer, "Anything you want, Herbert."

Throughout the long weeks of training, there was one member of the track team who was a constant source of dismay to Herb. He was his friend, Linden Jones, an older boy than himself, a year ahead of him in school, and much faster than him on the track. Time and again when Herb actually began to believe Laing's statements that one day he would be a runner, he would engage Jones in a friendly sprint of some undetermined distance and inevitably Jones would leave him in the dust before they had run many yards. Each time this happened Herb would threaten to give up running, but Laing prodded him on and finally entered him against Jones in three events of the annual house meet, in March of 1938.

The first event was the 100-yard dash, and Jones won. Herb was second and the crowd did not remember him as the runner they had laughed at just one year before. The third event on the program was the 440-yard dash, and again Herb was entered against Jones. And again Jones won, while Herb trailed him in second place by more than ten yards. The final event of the program

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was the 220-yard dash and the two met for the final time of the meet.

This was the race that convinced Herb McKenley that he could be a great runner, that Coach Laing had been right all along and he, himself, had been wrong. He beat Linden Jones in that 220-yard event. He beat him off the mark, and he led him all the way, opening up a four-yard gap at the finish line. Herb won the first race of his life, and he knew for the first time then that the one thing he wanted most in life was to be a track champion. The kid who stumbled over his own legs when he ran now jogged every step of the way from the home of his aunt, where he lived in Kingston, to school and back again in the evening. The boy who had been forced into physical education classes now went through the daily routine of drills to strengthen his leg muscles and improve his wind of his own volition. Just one victory did that.

And the one victory was followed by many more. Herb drove himself until in 1940 he was good enough to be elected track captain at Calabar. He returned for a final year of high school in the autumn of 1941 and he was re-elected captain, and whenever there was a school meet he was certain to win the three events he entered, the 100, the 220 and the 440. In July of 1941 he entered

his first major championship meet, the annual Jamaican championships, and competed against the best sprinters in the Caribbean and several champions from the United States. Herb ran only in the 220 that day and he finished second to Peyton Jordan, the American, in 21.2 seconds, but with that race his name sped to fame throughout his native island. Speed kings are really kings to Jamaican sports lovers, and in the 19-year old McKenley they now recognized the makings of a great champion.

It was shortly after this that Herb first thought of going to college in the United States. Nearby to Calobar School the Jesuit Fathers ran a Catholic mission school, called St. George's, and Herb, an Episcopalian, had gone there on occasions to run. He enjoyed chatting with the priests in their white cassocks and they admired him for the athlete he had now become. McKenley struck up a particular friendship with Father Thomas Fenney, S.J., one of the missionaries who delighted in telling Herb about the great track teams in the United States, and, most especially, at Boston College, a college conducted by the Jesuit Fathers and where Father Feeney had taught before leaving the United States. The priest would describe in all detail the thrills of an indoor meet at Boston or

Madison Square Garden, the rivalry on the cinders between Boston College and Holy Cross College, and he would often mention to Herb the name of Jack Ryder, the Boston College track coach, giving complete details of the accomplishments, the champions developed, that established Ryder as one of the greatest coaches of all time.

Herb would listen intently.

In December of 1941, however, he was graduated from Calobar, and he still had not made up his mind about college. The war had been on for Great Britain, and, of course, for Jamaica, for more than two years at the time and just before his graduation from high school, it had spread to engulf the United States, too. All through his boyhood Herb had heard his father say time and again that when he grew up he could follow his father's steps to Edinburgh University, to study medicine and one day to be a doctor. That had always appealed to Herb, but now he found that desire dying like flames under the water of his hopes to be a great track champion. When he left Calobar, however, he took a job with the British government in Kingston, working with the British version of O.P.A. helping to see that little business got a break in price control in the face of inflation. But Herb's thoughts were on college.



In August of 1942 he again entered the island championships, now a war-barren affair robbed of the glories of American competition. Herb supplied the thrills that year, as the Americans had always done in the past. Only from the island of Trinidad to the south did athletes from outside Jamaica come, braving the submarine-infested Caribbean, but had they come from all sections of the world, all would have had to battle to beat Herb that torrid August day. First off he won the 100-yard dash in 9.8 seconds, equalling the record for citizens of Jamaica. Next he romped to victory in the 220-yard dash in 21.2 seconds, tying the time made by Jordan the year before and equalling the record for the Island of Jamaica.

It was Herb's last island meet. When he felt the tape break across his chest and heard the cheers of the crowd floating down from the stands, he knew that the fondest desire in his heart was to be a runner of world record proportions. The following day after the meet he returned to May Pen to his home. He told his father that he had at last made up his mind about college.

"I hope it's to Edinburgh you'll go," said the doctor quickly.

"No, sir," replied Herb. "I'd like your permission to go to Boston College—in the United States.

They have an excellent pre-medical course there, and I can study to be a doctor, and—and they have a great track coach.”

And Dr. McKenley smiled and said, “Anything you want, Herbert.”

It was another month before transportation, swollen by wartime travel, was available, but in September there was room one day on a plane headed from Kingston to Miami. Herb said his good-byes to his family and friends in May Pen, and had another farewell session in Kingston. Father Feeney came to the seaplane base with Herb. “I’ve written friends of mine in Boston about your coming,” he said. “You will like Boston College, Herb.”

Herb knew he was going to like the United States the moment he caught sight of Miami from the air. Upon landing he set out on a sightseeing trip and had to sprint through the station finally to catch his train for Boston. In New York, Herb’s schedule called for him to change from Penn Station to a Boston train out of Grand Central, and as a taxicab drove him through New York’s teeming streets on its uptown journey, the champion of Jamaican tracks agreed that he had never dreamed of anything quite like the tall buildings and the hurrying crowds. “Everybody on the side-

walks looks as though they were running a twenty," he observed.

But his thoughts were on one thing even more than the crowds and the buildings. "Whereabouts is Madison Square Garden?" he asked the cab driver, "where they have the big track meets."

"Uptown. Eight avenyer and fiftiuth," said the cabbie. "I can swing you by there on the way to Gran' Central, if ya want."

"Never mind," said Herb. "I'll be seeing plenty of that place."

When he arrived at Boston's South Station, Herb took his first look at his new city and then took a cab to Newton's Chestnut Hill, where the Gothic towers of Boston College dominate the scene. He told the driver to take him directly to the athletic field, since it was early afternoon at the time and a September sun convinced him that track practice would be in progress. He walked down the incline from the college campus that leads to Alumni Field with its surrounding cinder track, suitcase in hand, and looked for a man who might be the track coach. A stoutish, graying man walking towards him with a stopwatch in his hand answered his question. "You're Herb McKenley," said the man. "I've been expecting you. I'm Jack Ryder."

"I'm very pleased to meet you, Mr. Ryder," said Herb. And then, smiling, "I was looking for a younger man."

"I'm not young enough to beat you in a sprint, I guess," smiled Ryder. "But I'm old enough to show you how you can beat yourself. When do you want to start?"

"Right away."

"Good." Ryder called an assistant manager, told him to show Herb to his room, and then to the dressing rooms in Boston College's athletic building. In three-quarters of an hour McKenley was back, this time outfitted in a Boston College track suit.

Jack Ryder, who had been watching track champions come, break the tape and records, and then go, for more than a quarter of a century, paused to admire the lean, loose trunk and the lanky, lithe legs that made up the frame of his newest prospective champion. "The minute I saw him in running shirt and shorts, I knew I had the makings of a record breaker," said Ryder later. "Not a champion yet—but the makings if ever there were the makings." And Jack Ryder stepped into the line that was headed by Frank Laing back in Kingston, Jamaica, the line of men who helped in the development of a champion.

Ryder's formula for McKenley was as simple as the one word potion Laing had prescribed—work! On that very first September day, McKenley discovered Ryder's cross country training course, a perspiring route over the hills of University Heights, around the picturesque Chestnut Hill Reservoir at the bottom of the hill leading down from Boston College, and back to a final winding sprint along the straightaway of the cinders on Alumni Field. McKenley ran that the first day. He ran it throughout the late fall and in the early months of winter, ran it through cold such as he had never known before and in snow which he had never seen before. The Boston newspapers, of course, quickly heard about Ryder's newest find and Herb began to find himself the center of a sports-page mystery as a super-speed demon from the mysterious Caribbean. "The Jamaica hurricane is a born runner," Herb read one day, and he smiled.

Hard luck plagued McKenley in the indoor season of 1943, and he disappeared from the sports pages as quickly as he had entered them. In his very first meet for Boston College, the annual Boston YMCA games, Herb started the evening by flying to victory in the 45-yard dash. But when he ran the "300" a little later, he pulled a leg

muscle on an unfamiliar turn and was forced to retire from competition for the rest of the indoor season.

The outdoor season brought both thrills and hard-luck chills to Herb. First off, he won eleven straight races in Boston College's outdoor duel meets and with each victory he began to feel more and more that he was going to make his name known across the country. But Ryder would say, "Wait, Herb. Don't expect too much right away. You need more experience—and more work!" Herb found that Ryder was right when he entered his first national competition in the 1943 IC4A championships at Randall's Island. Herb could do no better than fourth in the 100-yard dash, and third in the 220. He had the latter race won, he thought, leading the field with the tape almost within reach of his chest, and unconsciously slowed up to let two runners pass him in those final few yards. "Experience," Ryder had said, "and work."

Herb won his first championship that outdoor season, however, when he won the New England amateur 440-yard title on Boston College's own track in 49.1 seconds. He also won the National AAU junior 440 title in 47.7 seconds, but could finish only fourth in the senior championship

event. This meet provided Herb with his first opportunity to mingle with the names of track which he had worshipped from afar in Jamaica. Gunder Haegg, the Swedish record smashing miler, was there as the king-sized attraction, as were all the American champions, and nobody, nobody at all, bothered to notice Herb McKenley that day.

When the 1944 term began at Boston College, Jack Ryder once again began his work on Herb McKenley. The Jamaican had grown an inch taller and seconds speedier through the summer months, and through the autumn Ryder sculptured his masterpiece for the indoor season. Herb worked with Jack as he had never worked before, and then in the first Boston meet of the indoor season, all that work collapsed once again. In the Boston Athletic Association meet at Boston Garden, Herb fell while rounding a turn of the 600-yard run and could finish only fourth. He also could run but once more in the season of war-time shortages, making his first appearance in Madison Square Garden and finishing second in the National AAU 600-yard event. Outdoors, things were little brighter. He successfully defended his New England 440-yard title and added the 220-yard crown to his laurels in the meet held that year at the Massachusetts Institute of Tech-

nology track in Cambridge. But he still had not arrived as a National champion, finishing second in the IC4A, National Collegiates and National AAU quarter mile events during the season.

It was in the National Collegiates meet in Milwaukee in June of 1944 that McKenley first ran against Elmore Harris, the New Jersey speedster, who quickly became Herb's friendly rival, the one Herb most wanted to beat and the first of the type he had known since his schoolday rivalry with Linden Jones in Kingston. Harris scored two strikes on McKenley the first pair of races they engaged in, winning the Milwaukee event in 47.9 seconds and the National AAU championship at Randall's Island in 48 seconds flat. Herb chased Harris across the finish line in both races.

A year later, in June of 1945, Herb won his first big national title. And this came as the crowning glory to the most disappointing season he had yet experienced. Throughout the first seasons of his transition from the tropical climate of Jamaica to the cold winters of New England, Herb had fought off all of winter's attacks of cold and germs, but in January of 1945, he came down with a severe sore throat and was forced to undergo a hospital siege before ridding himself of the bug. He recovered in time to enter all the major meets



of the Boston and New York Garden season, but underweight as a result of the illness, he did not win a race with the exception of one at a late season meet in Cleveland. The sports writers, who had predicted that he would be the sensation of the season, now ignored him in large letters.

By the time spring had rolled around, however, Herb was ready to win his third New England quarter-mile championship, and then he went on to the Nationals at Randall's Island. This was his first National triumph. He won the 440-yard event in 48.4 seconds, and the only disappointment he knew in the triumph was the fact that Harris had not been one of the vanquished.

Following his winter's discouragement, Herb was a new man when this National title was his, and he realized for certain that the dreams of Frank Laing, of Jack Ryder, of Father Feeney, of his friends and rooters in both the United States and Jamaica, and of himself, would have to be fulfilled during the 1945-46 season, or they might never be at all. This would have to be the year when Herb McKenley, the finished product, would blossom into full championship bloom. There could be no more sickness certainly; the days of discouragement were done; this would have to be the big year, the payoff for the seasons

and seasons of work and disappointments. Herb McKenley wanted to break world's records, nothing less.

There was one drawback to his ambitions. With the war still going full blast, Boston College's student body had shrunk away to almost nothing. The army had had a special course under its training program there for a while, but when that was abandoned, due to the sudden need for infantrymen in Europe rather than specialists in American colleges, there were few students and no competition on the track left for McKenley. In the meets the season before, he had met many of the runners from the University of Illinois; they suggested that he transfer there. There, they said, he would have just the competition he needed and top-notch coaching as well. Herb thought about this move day and night, and finally went to Ryder and told him his story. Ryder listened and then, without a trace of selfishness, uttered words which had a strangely familiar ring for McKenley:

"Anything you think best," said Ryder. "And good luck."

The move proved a wise one indeed for Herb, for the Illini rose to the crest of the track world during this 1945-46 season, and Herb McKenley rose with it, or rather he helped to carry it there.

In the very first meet, an indoor duel with Ohio State, Herb broke the Illinois record for the 440-yard dash with a 49.3 seconds performance. In the big indoor meets of the Eastern season, he finished second to Elmore Harris in the 600-yard events of the Boston Athletic Association and the Millrose games, but soon he was to taste the first bite of triumph over his biggest rival at the Chicago relays, March 30, 1946. Herb won the 600 with Harris second in 1 minute 10.8 seconds, a new record for the event. Again, in the University of Chicago Field House, the words McKenley and record went together when Herb ran the 440 during the Big Ten indoor meet in 48.1 seconds, equalling the world's indoor record for that distance.

On and on went Illinois, and on and on went Herb McKenley, on into the outdoor season and all building up to a mighty climax. Herb proved himself a mighty team runner at the Penn relays in late April when he anchored the Illini relay teams to three victories, including the mile relay championship in 3 minutes 18.1 seconds, an event won by fifteen yards over the Navy and Michigan. West Point, Purdue, Michigan and Minnesota, in turn witnessed the speed of Herb McKenley as they engaged the Illini in duel meets during

the spring of 1946. Sometimes Herb would run the 440, sometimes the 440 and 220, sometimes the 100 and the 220, but whatever the event he ran, he won. And then, on June the first, came the greatest day of his life.

It was the day of the finals of the Big Ten outdoor track and field championships, being held this year at Illinois, itself. It was the day that everyone knew the Big Ten record of 47.4 seconds, which had been set by Binga Desmond of Chicago in 1916 and had withstood the onslaughts of those twenty years, was certain to be cracked. Herb McKenley had his eye on that mark and he was determined that nothing would stand in his way of breaking it. He was taken sick with a slight touch of stomach upset the night before, but he had gone to bed at nine o'clock and in the morning the illness was all but gone. A rain was falling to dampen his chances, but even that didn't deter Herb. It was still drizzling when the runners got on their marks for the quarter mile.

Herb knew, as all track men know records, that the world mark for the 440 was 46.4 seconds, set by Ben Eastman in 1932 and equalled by Grover Klemmer in 1941, but he had his heart set only on the Big Ten mark of 47.4 seconds when he heard the starter's gun. He broke to a beautiful start and

found himself gliding along the soggy track. At the first turn there was water on the cinders but he splashed right through it. Now the other runners were yards behind him, and suddenly there appeared before him only two runners who had since given up the sport—Eastman and Klemmer. His legs moved faster and his heart beat quicker, and when he broke the tape he knew in his stopwatch heart what the loudspeakers quickly confirmed: that he had run those 440-yards in 46.2 seconds and had broken the world's record.

Herb celebrated this merely by winning the 220 as well and then running the anchor leg as the Illinois mile relay team won its title, too. Before the month was over he disappointed himself by finishing second to his rival Harris in the National AAU championship quarter mile at San Antonio; Herb led at the start of the race, but ran into a hole, stumbled, and when he recovered himself, he had lost his chance by two yards to beat Harris.

But that world's record for the quarter mile established Herb as the great runner he and Frank Laing and Jack Ryder and all the rest knew he one day would be. In this speed-crazed world, a track man can accomplish many things, win endless victories, but he does not know the full acclaim of the sport until he is a world's record holder. The

name of Herb McKenley, which had resounded to tiny tidbits of fame throughout parts of the country, now spread throughout the world; it bounced around Jamaica on every tongue and the village of May Pen heard and smiled at its memories of the gangly legged youngster who had become a world's champion.

New York, too, heard about Herb's record, and as the capital of the sports world deemed it fitting to see the new champion for itself. The telegram invited Herb to run in a special 300-yard event at the farewell meet to Lennart Strand, the Swedish miler. The invitation did not actually add that Herb's opponent would be Elmore Harris; but Herb would have accepted anyhow; and he hastened to reply.

Now Herb McKenley was finishing his warmups and stepping out of his sweatsuit to get ready for the start of the 300-yard dash, and many thoughts raced at random through his mind. He looked at his track shoes the same ones his father had given him the money for those years ago in Jamaica. He remembered his first big track meet three years before when Gunder Haegg had been the one center of attraction; now Lennart Strand, Haegg's heir to the mile title, was here and he was sharing

the spotlight with Herb McKenley, the quarter mile record holder. Herb recalled Linden Jones and the day he had beaten him in Kingston, and he looked next to him at Elmore Harris and knew that there would be no holes in the track today.

But most of all he thought back to the days of hard work—the squats and the pushups at Calobar, the long cold miles over Jack Ryder's cross country course at Boston College, the labor and the disappointments that had gone into the manufacturing of a champion out of the raw material of a young, clumsy boy who hated to run. As Herb squatted for the starter's cry, "on your mark," he knew that those 300 yards ahead would prove that his quarter mile record was no fluke and that Herb McKenley was one of the truly great runners of all time.

Herb was off the mark with the gun. Before he had taken three steps he was a stride ahead of Harris. He ran as he had never run before. The yards and the cinders flew beneath his feet. His lanky legs, once gangly, moved like the levers of a perfect machine. He opened up his lead on Harris and with a final outburst of speed broke the tape two and one half yards the winner.

The loud speakers quickly paid him his full

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tribute. "Winner of the 300-yard dash, Herb McKenley of Illinois," they announced. "The time, 28.8 seconds. The world's record for this distance was 30.2 seconds set by Charley Paddock, April 23, 1921. This is a new world's record, another world's record for Herb McKenley."

Before the announcement was finished an official near the finish line pounded a friend on the back. "What did I tell you?" he shouted above the cheers. "That guy's a born runner, a born runner I tell you." And Herb, overhearing him, just smiled to himself.

### HERBERT HENRY MCKENLEY

#### RECORD IN CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITION

1943

Intercollegiate A.A.A.A. championships, May 15, New York City: Finished third to Kelsey of Princeton and Shaw of Cornell in 220-yard dash. Winning time, 21.3 seconds.

National A.A.U. championships, New York City, June 19 and 20: Won junior 400-metre championship in 47.7 seconds.

1944

National A.A.U. championships (indoors), New York City, Feb. 26: Finished second to Ufer of Michigan in 600-yards run. Winning time 1:11.3.

Intercollegiate A.A.A.A. championships, May 20, at Philadelphia: Finished second to McGuire of Colgate in 440-yards dash. Winning time 48.4 seconds.

National Collegiate championships, June 10, at Milwaukee: Finished second to Elmore Harris in 440-yards dash. Winning time 47.9 seconds.

National A.A.U. championships, June 17-18, New York City: Finished second to Elmore Harris in 400-meters dash. Winning time 48 seconds.



1945

National A.A.U. championships (indoors), Feb. 24, New York City: Finished third to Elmore Harris and Jim Herbert in 600-yards run. Winning time 1:13.2.

National A.A.U. championships, June 30-July 1, at New York City: Won 400-meters championship in 48.4 seconds.

1946

Western Conference championships (indoors), March 8-9: Won 440-yard championship in 48.1 seconds (equalling American indoor record). Ran anchor leg on winning Illinois one-mile relay team; time 3:21.3. Penn Relays, April 26-27: Ran anchor leg on winning Illinois 440-yard relay team; time 41.5 seconds. Ran first leg (440 yards) on winning Illinois spring medley relay team; time 3:29.7. Ran anchor leg on winning Illinois one-mile relay team; time 3:18.4.

Western Conference championships, May 31-June 1: Won 220-yard dash in 20.6 seconds. Won 440-yard dash in 46.2 seconds (bettering accepted world's record for distance). Ran anchor leg on winning Illinois one-mile relay team; time 3:12.4.

Central Collegiate championships, June 15: Won 220-yards dash in 21.3 seconds. Ran anchor leg on winning Illinois 440-yard relay team; time 41.6 seconds (new meet record). Ran anchor leg on winning Illinois one-mile relay team; time 3:13.5 (new meet record).

National Collegiate championships, June 21-22: Won 220-yards dash in 21.3 seconds. Won 440-yards dash in 47.6 seconds.

National A.A.U. championships, June 28-29, San Antonio: Finished second to Elmore Harris in 400-metres dash.

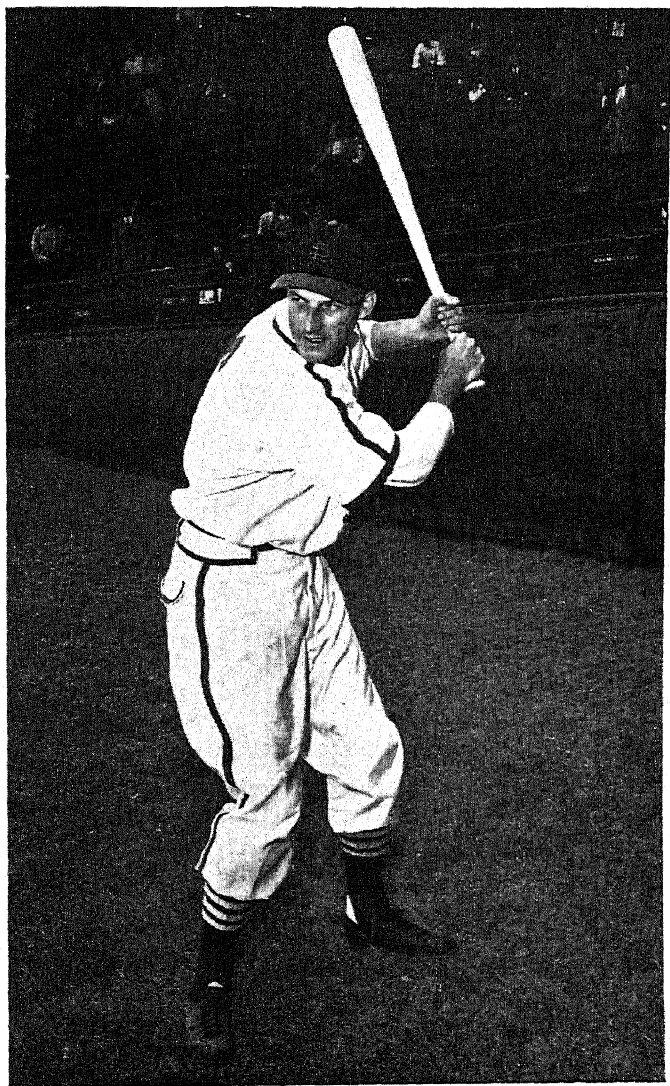
Western Conference track championships 440-yard dash—48 sec. American Indoor record.



STANLEY FRANK (STAN) MUSIAL

*“King of the Cardinals”*





STANLEY FRANK (STAN) MUSIAL



## CHAPTER XI

STANLEY FRANK (STAN) MUSIAL  
"KING OF THE CARDINALS"

THERE came into being during the 1946 baseball season a new group of fans who dedicated themselves to the proposition that Ted Williams is not the greatest player in baseball today. They were, many of them, substantial citizens of good character and judgment. Their reasons for rebellion against Williams' reign as king of the diamond were varied, but when they were asked to name any player superior in all-around ability, especially batting, to Williams, they would agree in one loud unanimous voice:

"Stan Musial!"

Musial, first baseman and outfielder with the singing St. Louis Cardinals perched on the chest of his baseball uniform these last five seasons, never has won the full credit he deserves as one of the truly great baseball players of all time. True, at the close of the 1945 season, he wore the National League batting crown for the second

time in his brief career and the experts, a vast army of typewriter troopers whose realm extends from coast to coast, voted him the most valuable player in the senior league by the highest total of points accorded any player since the present system of rating went into effect in 1938.

But during the season it was Williams, Joe DiMaggio, Dixie Walker—and others—who monopolized the headlines, while Stan Musial went about the grim business of out-hitting them in every department, of out-shining them on the field, and his reward was usually confined to the small figures of the sports pages which announce batting averages and the daily box scores.

Yet to know Musial is to realize that he is every bit as colorful in his own quiet way, as is, for instance, the Williams whose quaint characteristics of affability and temperament have made headlines all over the baseball world. Stan Musial is a quiet spoken, clear thinking man of twenty-six years, a serious, self-educated gentleman who can talk as intelligently on the international situation existing in the world as he can on the pennant possibilities of the clubs in the National League. More than a great ball player, he is a man of a character that would make him a far better hero and model for American youth than are many of the more



celebrated and popular idols of the sports world.

There are two incidents in the professional baseball life of Stan Musial that typify this off-the-diamond caliber of the on-the-diamond batting champion. When, in 1938, he first signed with the St. Louis Cardinals, it was at the time that Judge Landis, then high commissioner of baseball, had berated the St. Louis chain gang minor league system and ordered many Cardinal farm hands declared free agents. Musial had been ordered to report to a Cardinal farm club, but he felt in his heart that he did not want to play for an organization which was in bad with the white-haired commissioner of the game, itself. Furthermore, the Pirates had always been his favorite major league team, and now Pie Traynor, a personal friend of Stan's, was trying to get him to sign with the Pirates.

But Stan Musial knew in his heart that he had signed a contract to play for the St. Louis Cardinals, or wherever they sent him to play. Against his desires, his sense of fair play triumphed, and he remained with the Redbirds.

Again during the Mexican invasion of 1946, Musial was tempted to break his word. This time the temptation ran up into the thousands and thousands of dollars, for the Pasquel brothers of

the Mexican league, as well as being showmen and after the publicized stars of America, were also good baseball men and flaunted their biggest offers in the faces of the likes of Stan Musial. Every day the newspapers carried stories of big leaguers succumbing to the lure of the Mexican dollar. Right in the Cardinals, three of Stan's team-mates jumped the club and headed south of the border. Musial brought his troubles to Manager Eddie Dyer.

Dyer heard Musial out, then brought up only one subject. "You have two children, Stan," said the manager. "If you break your contract, you may very well become known as a guy whose word is no good. A few years from now people may bring this up against Dickie and Geraldine. It might not be fair to them."

When he walked out of Dyer's office, Stan had his back turned to Mexico and money. He stayed with the Cardinals.

It was a great relief to St. Louis fans that he did so, for at that time their Redbirds were chirping for their lives in the pennant race with the Brooklyn Dodgers. What a welcome sight it was—to see Musial step into the batter's box at least four times in every game!

The bat aimed straight up at the sky. The wide stance almost lapping over the back of the batter's box. The eyes staring straight and keenly at the pitcher, watching the ball all the way along its flight towards the plate. The hard, snapping swing. And the crack of the bat on the ball as Musial hits another.

These were welcome sights to St. Louis fans, to Manager Dyer and Stan's mates. For the big bat of the league batting champion meant the 1946 National League pennant and a World's Series triumph over the Boston Red Sox to St. Louis—and to Stan Musial it meant the first signs of tribute, at last, as one of the greatest all-time stars of baseball.

Baseball is breath to Musial. He is one of the most natural stars ever to walk along the winding path to the major leagues. He has played every position a left handed thrower can play, and he has played them all well. Strangely enough, Musial started his professional baseball career as a pitcher. An injury forced him out to left field. This last season, when the Cardinals needed a first baseman, Musial was called in to cover this position. There he played and starred most of the season. And it seems he has found his regular

position as first baseman for the remaining glorious years of his baseball career, which still are ahead of him.

Musial's career is, perhaps, still ahead of him in a full measure, for the years back to 1938 have been short ones and his professional baseball days to date have been interrupted by his wartime service of fourteen months in the navy. In the brief span of four full seasons in the National League plus a few weeks in the late season of 1941, Musial has twice won the league batting title and twice been voted the most valuable player in the league. He has shown the league's best pitchers that he can hit their trickiest offerings, so much so that a catcher on a rival National League team once said, "Musial can hit anything but an undersized feather in a blizzard of snowflakes." And the Brooklyn team has a title for him; the Dodgers simply refer to Musial as "The Man"; everyone on the squad knows who "The Man" is. And Billy Southworth, Stan's first manager when he was called up to the Cardinals in September of 1941, has explained the phenomenal ability of Musial, from his rookie days through his emergence as a major league veteran on a minor scale, with the trite but true statement, "He was born to play baseball."

As a matter of fact Stanley Frank Musial was born without a baseball glove to his name in the little town of Donora, Pennsylvania, some twenty-five miles from Pittsburgh, on the 21st of November, 1920. Stan's father, Lukasz Musial, is a retired steel worker, who came to this country from Poland and was determined that his sons should have the great benefits of college education afforded in the United States; for that reason he opposed Stan's entry into pro ball at first, but now he merely smiles, shrugs his shoulders, and inwardly glows with a fierce pride in the fame of his son. Stan's mother and four sisters still live in Donora, but his younger brother, Eddie, is away in the army; he is the property of the Chicago Cubs and Stan is certain that there will be another Musial in the major leagues just as soon as Eddie receives his unconditional release from Uncle Sam. Stan is married to Lillian Labash, the daughter of Donora's corner grocer, and they have two children, Dickie, now six years old, and Geraldine, now two.

As for his youth, spent in the mining and mill town, Stan now says, "It wasn't very important to my way of thinking, except the times I was on my way to Pittsburgh to see the Pirates play." Stan practically wore a path to Forbes Field from Don-

ora, for even at that time he knew that baseball was going to be his own life if he had anything to say about it. He played baseball, too. He played for the Donora High team, for the American Legion nine and for a team representing the local zinc works. Stan also played on Donora's title-winning basketball five, as a forward, but he stayed away from football. His baseball career meant too much for him to risk an injury.

While he was a junior at Donora, Musial signed his first professional baseball contract at the age of sixteen. Andy French, who was business manager of the Cardinals' Monessen, Pennsylvania, farm, saw the young schoolboy pitcher and, by the simple process of closing his eyes and dreaming, could see him chucking them in from the mound at Sportsman's Park sometime in the future.

Now Stan's father came to the front to object. Lukasz Musial wanted his son to go on beyond high school, to college. Baseball was not good enough. Stan had one friend, however, to whom he frequently went for advice. She was the high school librarian, and to this Miss Klotz he took his present problem. She advised him to accept the offer, for if he had decided on baseball as a career he could not start too early. Stan returned to his

father, told him of his decision, reasoned with him and finally received his permission to sign the contract.

At the conclusion of his senior year in high school Stan Musial stepped into organized ball as a pitcher.

With his whole heart set on being one day a major league pitcher, it was no wonder that Musial's career was nearly cut short two brief years later during the season of 1940. During his first two seasons with the Cardinals' Williamson farm, Stan stuck strictly to pitching, although in 23 games in 1939 his batting average of .352 was far more impressive than his mound marks. In 1940 he was moved up to the Daytona Beach team of the Florida State League, but early in the season his pitching arm went dead.

There were worries in the Musial household at the time. His wife, Lillian, was an expectant mother, and Stan dejectedly faced the finish of his diamond career; he decided within himself to quit and go home to work in Donora. The manager of the Daytona team at the time was Dick Kerr, whose keen baseball ears had heard about Musial's batting prowess at Williamson and whose keener baseball eyes had seen the style of Stan up at the

plate during his own team's pre-season training drills and exhibition games. He caught Musial practically in the midst of packing.

"I'd like you to wait and see if you can't play the outfield," said Kerr. "I'll give you a chance. I think you'll make me look good."

Musial played in 113 games for Daytona Beach that season. At bat he knocked that 113 right into reverse. He hit for .311.

Next season Stan climbed up a few links of the Cardinals' chain gang, to the Columbus club. There Burt Shotton, the manager, persuaded him to definitely give up being a pitcher. Burt wasn't quite satisfied with Stan as an outfielder, however, and before the season started he shipped him back to the Springfield, Missouri, team of the Western Association.

That was a discouraging beginning to the 1941 season for Stan Musial, but before the summer was ended he had turned it into the most meteoric season in his life—perhaps the most spectacular in the life of any young ball player in all baseball history.

His bat became an acetylene torch with which he burned his way out of the Western Association after little more than half the season had been played. His .379 batting average, in itself, was



reason for him to be jumped up to Rochester of the International League. In 54 games for that top-flight minor league club he batted .326, and in the month of September—with the Cardinals battling the Dodgers down the straightaway to the National League pennant—Stan Musial completed the record-breaking broad jump from Class C ball to the major leagues, all in one season, for the Cards were calling for help and they called for the sensational, twenty year old youngster.

It was not Stan's fault that the Dodgers beat out St. Louis for that pennant. In the twelve remaining games on the National League schedule he made twenty hits in forty-seven times at bat, belted one homer, drove in seven runs, and started his major league career with an average of .426!

No wonder Billy Southworth said he was "born to play."

That was an understatement!

There was no question thereafter as to the Cardinals' starting left fielder during the following season of 1942. Musial moved Johnny Hopp, a brilliant star in his own right, out of that position and there began one of the most amazing stories in the history of major league baseball.

Musial went into a "slump" in 1942, hitting for

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only .315 in 140 games, but in 1943, his second complete season in the major leagues, he really came into his own.

He led the National League in number of hits (220), in two base hits (48), in three base hits (20)—and won the batting crown with an average of .357!

The vote for the league's most valuable player that season was practically no contest at all. And the darling of Donora, who had just come of legal voting age, won the honors with the impressive vote total of 267 points.

In 1944 Musial had a "bad" year. He was able to lead the league only in number of hits (197) and two base hits (51), while his batting average dropped to a wretched .347. During the 1945 season Stan was in the navy, a seaman first class, who served at the Bainbridge, Maryland, training station, and overseas at the Pearl Harbor base in Hawaii.

Stan was able to play a good deal of ball in the Navy and when he was discharged shortly before the start of the 1946 spring training sessions, he was ready for the greatest year of his life. He reported to the Cardinals' camp in St. Petersburg, Florida, looking fit as his own big bat. The Cardinals were heavy pre-season favorites to win the

pennant, and Eddie Dyer, in his first year as a manager succeeding Billy Southworth who had gone to the Boston Braves, was really on the spot as a freshman. As the season rolled along, things looked darker and darker for the Cardinals. Three of their stars went to Mexico, two of them pitchers, and other pitchers failed to live up to their pre-season promise. The Brooklyn Dodgers surprised the world by taking the lead in the National League race and holding it over the second-place Cardinals throughout most of the season.

But all the while the big bat of Stan Musial kept booming along. He did not go to Mexico. He dug his spikes deeper into the batter's box and kept hitting that apple to all corners of the orchard, and that, perhaps more than any one factor, was the reason that the Cards were able to overtake the Dodgers and beat them out for the pennant in a two out of three game play-off.

This certainly is borne out by figures which never lie. Musial batted for a hot. 365 to win the batting championship. He was voted the league's most valuable by a count which made his previous selection seem like a grammar school child adding up to ten. He polled a total of 319 points, while his closest rival for the honor was Dixie Walker of the Dodgers, who polled 159. The previous

high vote for any one man was 305 for Jimmy Foxx while a member of the Red Sox in 1938.

And this was a season in which Musial had shifted to a new position, a position he had never played officially. He had fooled around at first base in other years, learning by himself the correct way to play the bag. When Dick Sisler was injured and Ray Sanders was traded to Boston during the 1946 season, Dyer suddenly found himself without a first sacker, but Musial volunteered for the post and now they will never get him out of there. That is good for Stan, too, for although he never mentioned it to anyone, every time he was forced to throw a ball in from the outfield, his arm going above his shoulder the memory of the old dead arm which ended his pitching career pained him.

The fact that Stan brought the Cardinals into the World Series of 1946 was hardly a thing new or sensational for him. Before entering the service, he had played in three World Series for the Cardinals. He had played capably in all three, although he had never shone with the brightness of which he had proven himself capable during the championship season. But in this 1946 series, Stan would be playing on the same field and against

Ted Williams, who got more headlines while Musial got more base hits.

Williams, of course, turned out to be the goat of the series, his few singles taking on the character of events. Musial did not star, but he did not have to star to outshine Williams in their first man to man duel. And there was one outstanding incident in the series which put the spotlight on Musial as the great ball player he is.

It was in the sixth game of the series, and an important one for the Cardinals, who had returned to St. Louis trailing the Red Sox two games to three. They must win this game to tie up the series and to keep the Red Sox from walking off with the world's championship. In the third inning of that sixth game Musial came to the plate. He stepped into the batter's box, his familiar bat-towards-the-heavens stance bringing hope to the St. Louis fans. But the best he could do was hit a grounder down to the right of Johnny Pesky, the Red Sox shortstop.

Pesky made the play to first base, but it was still a base hit. It was a base hit, because Stan Musial, the National League batting champion, legged it down the path to first base as though he were a rookie battling for his first base hit. He beat the

throw by a single stride, and because he did the Cardinals scored three runs instead of one that inning, went on to win the game and tie up the series, which they won over the favored Red Sox in the seventh game.

Stan Musial in this year 1947 is but twenty-six years old. Behind him are only four seasons and twelve games of major league baseball. He is still improving. He is always trying to improve himself. "I used to ground out a lot," he once said, "because pitchers would throw me balls that would break in on my hands. I'd figure they were right over the plate, but when I'd swing I'd be lucky to hit them on the very handle of the bat. Sliders used to fool me badly. Then I noticed that I was taking my eye off the ball before it reached the plate. I practiced watching it all the way, and my hitting improved."

Some ball players passed up opportunities to improve themselves while they were in the service, but not Stan Musial. "In the Navy, my shipmates wanted me to hit home runs all the time, so I tried to oblige them," Stan told some newspapermen one day. "So I used to get a little closer to the plate and try to hammer those inside pitches out of the park."

He retained this habit after rejoining the Car-

dinals, and it certainly helped him during the 1946 season. Still Stan stands farther from home plate than do most batters. He gets the power of his body back of his swing with an uncommonly long stride into the pitch. Slow motion cameras have pictured and measured this stride as twelve inches towards the pitcher, and six inches towards the plate. Musial hits the ball with a full swing, and has the faculty of snapping the full power of his wrists into the ball at precisely the right moment.

Stan Musial is still "young" Musial, and any of his team-mates on the St. Louis club will tell you that "Stash"—as they call him—still has his brightest years in baseball ahead of him. "He will prove that he, not Williams, is the greatest hitter in the game," they predict.

If Musial's greatness on the diamond is still ahead of him, his just recognition on the sports pages certainly lies ahead of him. At the latest tabulation the sports writers were still writing the name of Williams at a proportion of 10-1 to their mention of Musial. The swing of the typewriters will tend towards the Cardinals' batting king more and more, however, for slowly but certainly the sports writers are discovering that Musial is a great ball player, a colorful ball player in

his own unassuming manner, and a nice fellow to talk with.

During the 1946 season, with the Cardinals playing the Braves in Boston, Williams' own typographical bailiwick, three sports writers covering the game saw Musial get five hits out of five times at bat, further demonstration of his claim to the title of batting champion. After the game they went to the St. Louis locker room, and in a talk with Musial they learned many of the story-stuffed incidents of his colorful career—his father's opposition to his first contract, his struggles as a pitcher, his conversion into an outfielder, his battle to be a great batter, his shift to first base—and the other tidbits which make the story of Stan Musial a wonderful one. When the reporters left Musial, each paid him a compliment:

"He's certainly a great ball player," said the first.

"Yeah, plenty of color too!" echoed the second.

"He's a nice guy," said the third.



## STANLEY FRANK MUSIAL

Born, Donora, Pa., November 21, 1920.

Bats left. Throws left. Height, 6 feet. Weight, 175 pounds.

| Year | Club                    | League | Pos.  | G   | AB  | R   | H   | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|------|-------------------------|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1938 | Williamson              | MSL    | P     | 26  | 62  | 5   | 16  | 1  | 6   | .258 |
| 1939 | Williamson              | MSL    | P     | 23  | 71  | 10  | 25  | 1  | 9   | .352 |
| 1940 | Daytona<br>Beach        | FSL    | P-OF  | 113 | 405 | 55  | 126 | 1  | 70  | .311 |
| 1941 | Springfield             | WA     | OF    | 87  | 348 | 100 | 132 | 26 | 94  | .379 |
| 1941 | Rochester               | IL     | OF    | 54  | 221 | 43  | 72  | 3  | 21  | .326 |
| 1941 | St. Louis               | NL     | OF    | 12  | 47  | 8   | 20  | 1  | 7   | .426 |
| 1942 | St. Louis               | NL     | OF    | 140 | 467 | 87  | 147 | 10 | 72  | .315 |
| 1943 | St. Louis               | NL     | OF    | 157 | 617 | 108 | 220 | 13 | 81  | .357 |
| 1944 | St. Louis               | NL     | OF    | 146 | 568 | 112 | 197 | 12 | 94  | .347 |
| 1945 | (In United States Navy) |        |       |     |     |     |     |    |     |      |
| 1946 | St. Louis               | NL     | OF-1B | 154 | 616 | 121 | 226 | 16 | 102 | .367 |

## WORLD SERIES RECORDS

|      |           |    |    |   |    |   |   |   |   |      |
|------|-----------|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1942 | St. Louis | NL | OF | 5 | 18 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 2 | .222 |
| 1943 | St. Louis | NL | OF | 5 | 18 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | .278 |
| 1944 | St. Louis | NL | OF | 6 | 23 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 2 | .304 |
| 1946 | St. Louis | NL | 1B | 7 | 27 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 4 | .222 |



HAROLD (HAL) NEWHOUSER

*“Pride of the Tigers”*





HAROLD (HAL) NEWHOUSER



## CHAPTER XII

HAROLD (HAL) NEWHOUSER  
"PRIDE OF THE TIGERS"

WHEN "Wish" Egan, the chief scout of the Detroit Tigers, wandered to a high school game in Detroit one spring day in 1936, his eyes almost popped out from his head at what he saw. There, in the middle of the diamond, a slender, handsome youngster of fifteen was pitching a baseball so fast that Egan was fascinated.

The youth, a left-hander, was Harold Newhouser, and he was hurling for Wilbur Wright High School. Even Egan does not remember who the opposing team was or the score of the game. All he can recall is that, when he saw the boy, he knew that the Tigers did not have to go beyond their own city limits to unearth what promised to be one of the great pitchers in major league history.

Egan watched Newhouser closely for two years after that. Every time he heard that Newhouser was going to pitch, either for the high school or

for the Detroit Junior American Legion team, he made it his business to be among those present in the stands.

He realized that he was watching a raw youngster who had a great deal to learn. But Egan knows a ball player when he sees one, and he was determined that, when Newhouser was ready to go into professional baseball, the team with whom he belonged was the Tigers.

He invited Newhouser to work out at Briggs Stadium and meet some of the men who were later to become his team-mates. Each time Hal came out to the ball park, Egan liked him better. Newhouser, a blond, blue-eyed kid with a friendly smile, needed instruction, but that was all he needed to become a big-league pitcher. He had the physical equipment and he had the ambition. A good baseball education, plus some experience, would make him a great hurler, and wise old Egan knew it.

Egan knew something else. Newhouser had a curve ball, but he did not know how to throw it properly. As Egan watched him through the formative years when Newhouser was still pitching for his high school team, the old scout realized that the boy would first have to forget what he knew



about throwing a curve and start learning the correct method.

"If Hal had kept on throwing a curve the way he did when I first saw him," Egan recalls, "he would have snapped his wrist out of joint long before he ever signed a contract with us. He was holding the ball the wrong way. It was like a batter hitting the ball hard by batting cross-handed."

While Newhouser was pitching around Detroit as a youngster, he piled up an amazingly large number of strikeouts. Egan often saw him fan as many as twenty-five high school opponents in a nine-inning game, which is almost perfection. His wildness prevented him from winning some of these contests, for he walked many men as a youngster, and, more than once, he would pass five or six men in succession to let an opposing team score two cheap runs.

Egan spent two years trying to get Newhouser to change his style. Anyone less patient than "Wish" would have given up, and anyone less ambitious than Newhouser would have done the same thing. But the boy wanted to learn, and Egan had the knowledge to pass on to him. Time and again, Egan would quietly, but consistently,

show Newhouser how to hold the ball when he threw a curve, and, time and again, Newhouser would try it, fail and then, from force of habit, go back to the old system.

Finally, Egan succeeded in helping Hal to overcome his bad habit of holding the ball the wrong way when he tried to throw a curve. From then on, it was a matter of learning the correct procedure. Day in and day out, Newhouser practiced. When he pitched in a game, either for the school team or for the Legion nine, he tried to follow Egan's teaching. If Hal failed, he would simply step back and throw in that magnificent fast ball which had first attracted Egan's attention.

At last, on one spring day in 1938, Newhouser, who was then in his junior year in high school, phoned Egan and yelled, excitedly, "Wish, I've got it!"

Egan rushed over and Hal showed him his new curve. It was a big-league curve, thrown in big-league style, and it broke so sharply that Egan knew that, at last, his boy had learned one of the fundamentals of pitching.

Newhouser could not wait to finish high school. At the end of three and a half years, he decided to forget the remainder of his education and con-

centrate on baseball. He has been more or less concentrating on baseball ever since.

Hal was only seventeen years old, and he could not sign his own contract. Egan went to his home and Hal's father, a man in ordinary circumstances, signed it for him. Until Hal was twenty-one, his father had to take care of that important detail.

Egan was so elated to get the kid under contract that he did not want to send him to the minors. However, he realized that Newhouser had to pitch regularly, and he wanted him to get a little experience in competition. At the time, in early 1939, Detroit could not risk losing ball games because of the inexperience of a young pitcher, no matter how promising, so, against his better judgment, Egan sent the boy to Alexandria in the Evangeline League.

Newhouser, although winning four games while losing eight, burned that league up with his left arm. He struck out 107 men and walked only twenty-nine, so, before the season was half over, the Tigers, who owned both the Alexandria team and the Beaumont club in the higher class Texas League, transferred him to Beaumont.

In Texas, Hal lost fourteen games while winning five, but he fanned eighty-five men during

the short period that he was there, and, with the 1939 season still on, he was brought back to the parent club in his home town. He has never left the Tigers to this day.

By the time Newhouser got back to Detroit, Manager Del Baker was as enthusiastic over him as was Egan. The Tigers' field director agreed with Egan. Newhouser was young and raw and inexperienced, but it would be better to keep him where he could be watched and taught daily than to farm him out to a minor league club again.

"It was strange," explains Egan. "You know, we were actually afraid that Hal would get hurt or something in the minors. I've never seen a boy whom I was so sure was a big-leaguer. I knew he'd come into his own sooner or later, but he looked so frail that I felt we'd be better off if we kept him right with us."

But Newhouser was not a big-leaguer yet. He received plenty of publicity when he returned to Detroit, but he got it because of his extreme youth rather than because of his pitching. Fresh out of high school, he was wearing a major league uniform only six months after Detroit baseball followers had seen him pitch in one of their own schools. There have been so few big league stars who went into the top brackets of the baseball

world directly from high school that they can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Newhouser had spent less than five months in the minors before he was permanently wearing the spangles of the Tigers.

But four years passed before Hal actually did arrive. The four years were frustrating, heart-breaking years for him and for the ball club. Year after year, he lost more games than he won. He built up a huge strikeout record, but he matched it with a tremendous base-on-balls record. In common with most fast, young pitchers, he was wild. He could not seem to acquire control to go along with his speed ball and the curve that Egan had taught him how to pitch.

And then, overnight, he arrived. In 1943, he had won only eight games while losing seventeen. That was his fourth year with the Tigers. He was twenty-two, married and a father, a kid no longer, yet he still seemed to be the raw, inexperienced boy he had been when he first joined the club. Only the great patience of Baker, and his successor as Detroit manager, Steve O'Neill, and Hal's own determination to make the grade kept him from going back into the minors.

Hal was taciturn and not particularly friendly as a boy. He lived for baseball and, at the time,

he did not care about anything else. Even after Egan brought him into the Detroit organization, he failed to warm up to his team-mates.

More than one manager has given up on a promising pitcher after four years. More than one manager has shrugged his shoulders and thought of what might have been in releasing a boy like Newhouser, who seemed to have all the ingredients that go with baseball greatness but, for some reason or other, failed to capitalize on them.

Whether or not O'Neill was actually ready to give up on Newhouser will never be known. The year 1944 was a bad year for baseball. Stars had gone into the service, and there was even some question whether or not the game could be carried on because of the war. Newhouser, because of a serious childhood disease, could not get into any branch of the service. With the baseball competition less keen than in normal years, he had to arrive in 1944 if he were to arrive at all.

He not only arrived, but he became, in 1944, the most dangerous pitcher in baseball. If that had been his only good season, he could be classed as a wartime pitcher, but he began a streak that year which, by the end of the 1946 season, when everyone was back from the war, was still continuing.

Since 1944, Hal Newhouser has not had a year when he won less than 25 games. In other words, for three seasons in succession, he has blinded his opposition to such an extent that he has become accepted as one of the greatest pitchers of his time. By the end of the 1946 season, he was only twenty-five years old. He gives promise of remaining a star for half a dozen years more, perhaps longer. If he continues the pace which he has belatedly set for himself, he could conceivably join the immortal ranks of pitchers who have won three hundred or more games during their major league careers.

In the meantime, he has shown a business acumen which compares favorably with that of men twice his age. Newhouser is not simply a ball player. He is the proprietor of three or four different sales organizations. His Newhouser Sales Company in Detroit has exclusive contracts which net its owner as much money, if not more, than he makes out of baseball—and Newhouser is one of the highest paid men in the game.

His office is not far from Briggs Stadium. During the baseball season, when the team is in Detroit, his routine is a busy one. He arrives at his office early in the morning, except on the day after a night game. He is in contact with his secretary every day, regardless of where he is. He takes

an active interest in the business and, when the baseball season is over, he concentrates exclusively on it.

Newhouser has almost as many irons in the fire as his great Cleveland rival, Bob Feller. In discussions among fans, when the question of who the greatest pitcher in the game is, the argument always boils down to Newhouser, Feller, and Tex Hughson and Dave Ferriss of the Red Sox. Usually, it ends up with the two Boston men considered close to the top, but not quite there, and Newhouser and Feller standing at the peak.

Newhouser is not as spectacular as Feller, nor is he as durable. Feller has pitched two no-hit games and has scores of low-hit games to his credit. When the 1946 season ended, Feller went on a whirlwind barnstorming tour, which took him from coast to coast, as well as to Honolulu in Hawaii and kept him pitching every day.

Newhouser probably could not stand that sort of routine if he wanted to, and he probably would not if he could. Where Feller is a ball player's ball player, who will pitch any time anywhere, Newhouser is a conservative young man who has a definite theory that the less unnecessary pitching he does, the longer he will last in the game.

He will pitch whenever he is called upon to



pitch. He has finished up plenty of games for the Tigers, and when he works on the mound, he works hard. But, once the season is over, the Detroit southpaw forgets baseball and concentrates on his business interests until it is time to go south for spring training.

That he has been recognized in the profession for his greatness as a pitcher can be proven by the fact that he became the first ball player ever to be named as the most valuable man in the league two years in succession. He won the award in 1944 and he won it again in 1945, when his 25 victories paced the Tigers to the pennant, and his two victories in three starts gave them a World Series victory over the Chicago Cubs.

Newhouser has long since beaten his tendency for wildness. In 1945, he struck out nearly twice as many men as he walked, and in 1946 he struck out almost three times as many. In the three games of the World Series in which he played in 1945, he struck out twenty-two men while passing only four.

He has occasional bad days, such as in the 1944 All-Star game, when he pitched less than two innings, and allowed three hits and three runs. These days are rare, however. Usually, Newhouser has complete control of any situation in

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which he finds himself. He has pitched in three All-Star games, and, in the 1943 contest, he allowed three hits and no runs, while in the 1946 game, the National Leaguers touched him for only one hit and no runs during the three innings that he pitched.

When the stars all returned to action in 1946, Newhouser showed that he was as great as he had always promised to be by winning 26 games and losing nine. Curiously enough, in all three of his best years, he lost exactly the same number of games, dropping nine in 1944, 1945 and 1946. But he won twenty-nine games in '44, then added twenty-five victories a year later and twenty-six more in 1946, a year climaxed by a well-advertised duel with Feller, which the Cleveland star won.

The duels between Newhouser and Feller have become classics in Detroit and Cleveland, where the two hold forth. They are always advertised several weeks in advance, and the opposing managers arrange their pitching schedules so the two can meet on Sundays, if possible. However, every so often an advertised clash between the two does not materialize, for both O'Neill and Manager Lou Boudreau of Cleveland will not risk their team's chances by pitching either of their aces out of turn.

Newhouser, while winning the most valuable player award in 1944 and 1945, fell short of capturing the prized title three years in a row only because the baseball writers voted Ted Williams, whose big bat paced the Red Sox to the 1946 pennant, the top man of the year in that respect.

The Detroit star was second, however, and a close one, at that. The Tigers were the defending champions, having won both pennant and World Series in 1945. They got away to a poor start in 1946, but Newhouser's consistency kept them from collapsing altogether. During most of the season, the Boston team was so far ahead that it was impossible to catch that club, but the New York Yanks seemed to be safely entrenched in second place.

Thanks to Newhouser, the Tigers suddenly woke up and, in late July, they started a slow, painful drive which pulled them up into contention for the second position in the league standing. Their September record was the best in the league, for Newhouser kept on winning and his teammate, Hank Greenberg, burst out into a home run hitting spree. Two weeks before the season ended, the Tigers caught up with the Yanks, and then went on to clinch second place in the league.

Newhouser is a golfer too, one of the best among

the major league ball players. Golf is a sport which some managers frown on, for they are afraid that the golf swing, being different from a baseball swing, is likely to hurt a batter if he plays too much golf in the off season. Newhouser, being a pitcher, and, in common with most pitchers a poor hitter, does not have to worry about that.

He has played golf for years, and, although pressure of business frequently keeps him away from the links, he can still go around a golf course in very respectable figures. In the early spring, just before he begins training with the team, he usually takes his wife and family to Florida and plays golf to get into shape.

Another of Newhouser's favorite activities is basketball. He was one of the stars of his high school basketball team, and, also in common with many ball players, he could have gone on to great heights in the hoop game if he had so desired. Being tall (six feet, two inches) and very fast, he is naturally built for a basketball player. He still indulges in the sport for exercise during the winter while he is around Detroit.

One other thing that Newhouser has in common with other big league ball players is his love for hunting. Almost all major leaguers love to hunt and fish in the off season. A good many of them

earn their entire income during the months of the baseball season and then relax completely all winter by indulging in their favorite outdoor sport. Williams, the great Red Sox slugger, for example, not only spends practically all his spare time with rod and gun, but he even goes fishing or hunting on days off during the season.

Newhouser does not carry his recreation that far, but he usually tries to get away for at least one hunting trip a year in Northern Michigan or nearby Canada. With his business keeping him active around Detroit, he does not have as much leisure time as some of his fellow players enjoy.

Because of his outside activities, Newhouser is one of the few big league stars who really wishes there were more than twenty-four hours to a day. His close friends marvel at his ability to take every advantage of every hour every day, even during the season.

Yet, the young Detroit star always puts baseball first. That is his first love, and, whatever else he may want to do or think he has to do, he will not jeopardize his baseball career. If something went wrong with his arm necessitating his going to a warm climate and doing nothing but resting and working on it, he would gladly drop everything. As long as there is such a thing as a telephone

handy, Newhouser, who has several competent people working for him, could keep in touch with his business affairs.

Despite his business acumen, Newhouser is not considered a hard man to deal with. Every year, or whenever his contract comes up for renewal, he used to get together with Jack Zeller, who, up to October of 1946, was general manager of the Tigers, and agree on terms. Where many stars have well-publicized arguments with their owners, Newhouser never has trouble agreeing with the men who pay him his salary for playing baseball.

With the exception of Feller, who operates on a salary and percentage arrangement with President William Veeck of the Cleveland club and is one of the highest paid players of all time, Newhouser makes more money for throwing a baseball than any man in the game's history. His jump into the higher brackets came late, for, up to 1944, although he was always showing promise of great success, he had never quite reached his peak. Now, however, Walter O. Briggs, the invalid owner of the Tigers, gladly pays Newhouser whatever he demands within the bounds of reason, and, in this case, they are very liberal.

In his first few years with the Tigers, he kept to himself, and seldom bothered to talk to anyone

else unless he was spoken to. This tendency to be what ball players call a "loner" made him some enemies in his early days as a professional ball player.

Through the years, however, he has taken an about face in his dealings with people. He is approachable and polite today, and, where he used to drive others away with his brusqueness, he now is courteous and easy to talk to, albeit he is all business.

Newhouser is very serious. He smiles rarely and has never given much evidence of possessing a sense of humor. Whatever he does, he does completely, and he cannot stand failure. If he finds that he is doing something wrong, he studies the problem carefully and fights it until he has it beaten.

Even now, with his many business interests, Newhouser drives himself for perfection. He will settle for nothing less, and that is one of the reasons why, despite his lack of higher education, both his baseball and his outside careers have been characterized by great success.

That Newhouser still has a long career ahead of him goes without saying. He is a bright enough young man to be considered managerial material some day, and there is every indication that he

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will be connected with baseball in some capacity for many, many years to come.

### HAROLD NEWHOUSER

Born, May 20, 1921, Detroit, Michigan.

Height, 6 ft., 2 in. Weight, 180 pounds. Throws left-handed, bats right-handed.

| Year | Club       | League | G  | IP  | W  | L  | P.C. | H   | R   | SO  | BB  |
|------|------------|--------|----|-----|----|----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1939 | Alexandria | Evang. | 12 | 96  | 8  | 4  | .667 | 66  | 37  | 107 | 29  |
| 1939 | Beaumont   | Texas  | 22 | 134 | 5  | 14 | .263 | 111 | 76  | 85  | 73  |
| 1939 | Detroit    | Amer.  | 1  | 5   | 0  | 1  | .000 | 3   | 3   | 4   | 4   |
| 1940 | Detroit    | Amer.  | 28 | 133 | 9  | 9  | .500 | 149 | 81  | 89  | 76  |
| 1941 | Detroit    | Amer.  | 33 | 173 | 9  | 11 | .450 | 166 | 109 | 106 | 137 |
| 1942 | Detroit    | Amer.  | 38 | 184 | 8  | 14 | .364 | 137 | 73  | 103 | 114 |
| 1943 | Detroit    | Amer.  | 37 | 196 | 8  | 17 | .320 | 163 | 88  | 144 | 111 |
| 1944 | Detroit    | Amer.  | 47 | 312 | 29 | 9  | .763 | 264 | 94  | 187 | 102 |
| 1945 | Detroit    | Amer.  | 40 | 313 | 25 | 9  | .735 | 239 | 73  | 212 | 110 |
| 1946 | Detroit    | Amer.  | 37 | 296 | 26 | 9  | .743 | 215 | 70  | 273 | 99  |

### WORLD SERIES RECORD

|      |         |       |   |                  |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |
|------|---------|-------|---|------------------|---|---|------|----|----|----|---|
| 1945 | Detroit | Amer. | 3 | 20 $\frac{2}{3}$ | 2 | 1 | .667 | 25 | 14 | 22 | 4 |
|------|---------|-------|---|------------------|---|---|------|----|----|----|---|

### ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

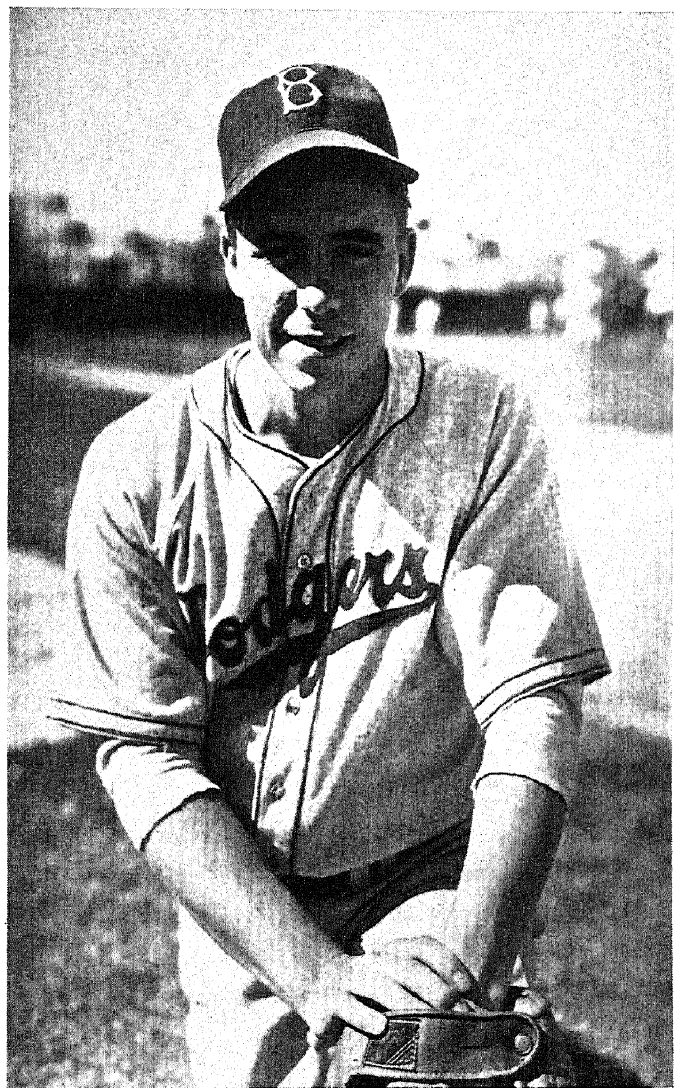
|      |                 |  |                 |   |   |      |   |   |   |   |
|------|-----------------|--|-----------------|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|
| 1943 | American League |  | 3               | 0 | 0 | .000 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1944 | American League |  | 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ | 0 | 0 | .000 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| 1946 | American League |  | 3               | 0 | 0 | .000 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 |



HAROLD H. (PEEWEE) REESE

*“Brooklyn’s First Citizen”*





HAROLD H. (PEEWEE) REESE



## CHAPTER XIII

HAROLD A. (PEEWEE) REESE  
"BROOKLYN'S FIRST CITIZEN"

**B**ECAUSE of Harold (Peewee) Reese, a baseball team was bought and sold. This everlastingly young, star shortstop of the Brooklyn Dodgers was the storm center of one of the strangest controversies in baseball history, which was settled in the strangest manner—and all because he was too good a ball player.

Reese always loved baseball. As a youngster, he played it around Louisville. He sold peanuts in the ball park of the Colonels there, never dreaming while so doing that the day would come when, because of him, the team would be purchased, and, also because of him, it would be sold again.

The Louisville team in the American Association was always a potentially good franchise. The American Association is one of the three Class AAA leagues in baseball, which means that it is one jump short of being a major league. Any

Triple A team is worth money, and Louisville is no exception. But back in 1937, the Colonels began to run into financial trouble. Louisville was a last place team, and the fans in the city, who make baseball their second love, behind horse racing, stayed away from the ball park in droves.

It was just about this time that Reese, an eighteen-year old youngster, walked into the park and asked for a tryout. The Colonels were so desperate for any kind of help that they were quite willing to try out Reese as a shortstop.

From that moment on, there was no doubt regarding Peewee's future. He was the smoothest operator in the short field that the Association had seen in a long time. He had a rifle arm and amazing agility on the ball field. He could get ground balls and line drives which no one else could reach, and he robbed scores of rivals of base hits because of his terrific speed.

But one great shortstop cannot make an inferior ball club a pennant winner, and, in spite of Reese, the Colonels continued to lose games and the Louisville customers continued to stay away from the park. The result was that the club was put on the market, to be sold to the highest bidder.

The Boston Red Sox were looking for a Triple A farm club, but, at the time, Owner Tom Yaw-

key, who had already sunk millions into the major league team, did not want to go in too heavily for a minor league franchise. He ended up by getting together with Donie Bush and Colonel Frank McKinney, who now is president of the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the trio bought the Louisville team for a reported price of \$100,000.

While Yawkee wanted a minor league franchise to help build his Red Sox, McKinney and Bush went in on the deal principally for one reason. That reason was Peewee Reese. They figured—and correctly—that, no matter how poorly the Colonels were doing in the American Association race, Reese alone, who was sought by most of the teams in the two major leagues, would return their original investment when the time came to sell him.

Bill Burwell was manager of the team, and the Colonels, bolstered by new money, began to do a little better. But Reese could not be kept in the minors much longer, and it was obvious that the youngster deserved his chance to go into the big time of baseball.

Naturally, the Red Sox wanted Reese. Manager Joe Cronin was reaching a point in his career where he wanted to direct the club from the bench and retire as an active player. The club was in the

market for a shortstop, and, through the connection with the Colonels, they had one in Reese. Yawkey and the Red Sox front office took it for granted that Peewee would move up to them in time to begin the 1940 season.

McKinney and Bush, who, between them, controlled the Colonels, since they owned two-thirds of the franchise, had other ideas. They knew that by letting Reese go to the Red Sox they would have to sell him for less than he was worth. Furthermore, whatever they got would mean little, for, in a sense, with Yawkey owning the Red Sox outright and one-third of the Colonels, a good part of the money would go out of one pocket and into the other. They decided, under the conditions, to sell Reese to the highest bidder, and, if the highest bidder were some club other than the Red Sox, then Reese would go to that club.

Neither McKinney nor Bush intended to pocket the money. They knew that the team had to be built up, and they wanted the extra thousands that they could get for Reese to put back into the club. Yawkey, on the other hand, was anxious to get Reese to fill up the hole that inevitably would be left when Cronin retired, but he did not care to bid against himself for his own ball player.

In the meantime, the Brooklyn Dodgers were



sadly in need of a shortstop. Like Cronin, Manager Leo Durocher of Brooklyn had reached the end of the trail as a ball player. He had played through part of the 1939 season, but he was getting old, as ball players go, and he had not found a suitable replacement.

Larry MacPhail then ran the Brooklyn team from the front office, and MacPhail was determined to get Reese. The result was that he outbid everyone for the short fielder, and he finally purchased him for \$100,000, which was exactly the amount McKinney and Bush were reported to have paid for the whole team in the first place.

Yawkey was slightly more than distressed about the whole thing. He made up his mind then and there that he would never again allow himself to be outvoted because of not owning a majority share in a baseball team.

So, because of the Reese deal and the fact that the Red Sox lost him to Brooklyn, Yawkey stepped in and bought out McKinney and Bush. To this day, the Red Sox own the Louisville club outright and, to this day, Yawkey has never purchased an interest in a minor league team unless he could own it entirely.

Many fans think that Reese's nickname, "Pee-wee," stems from the fact that he looks small on

the diamond. He does look small, but actually he is comparatively big, since he stands five feet, ten inches, which is tall for a shortstop. Except for the peerless Marty Marion of the St. Louis Cardinals, whose greatness has always kept Reese from being the best short fielder in the National League, Reese is one of the tallest men in his position in the game today.

Back in his schoolboy days in Louisville, Reese was the city marble champion for several years. His ability to capture all the top prizes in Louisville for his efficiency with the agates earned him the name, "Peewee," and it has stayed with him ever since.

Reese was with the Dodgers for three years before he went into the navy at the end of the 1942 season. He got away to a bad start at Brooklyn, for, in the middle of August of 1940, his first year there, he broke his heel sliding into second base, and he was through for the remainder of the season.

For the next two years, he was the regular Dodger shortstop, but, although he showed flashes of the greatness which had made him the best in the American Association, he had trouble controlling his throw across the diamond. With his rifle arm, he was hard for a first baseman to handle. He

threw the ball so fast that, unless it was right on the mark, it often got away from its target.

Fortunately, during those pre-war years, Brooklyn had a great first baseman in Dolph Camilli. But even Camilli could not handle Reese when his throws were wide, and the result was that, although Peewee often made virtually impossible plays in the field, he nullified them more than once by wild throws to first.

He retained that tendency to throw the ball away all during his early years at Brooklyn, but he made up for it by his flashiness in the field. He made more putouts than any other shortstop in the National League in 1941 and 1942, and, in 1942, he led the league in assists and double plays.

Peewee was a prime factor in the 1941 pennant race, which the Dodgers won, to the colorful delight of the most rabid baseball fans in the world—the good people of Brooklyn. He became one of the popular heroes of Flatbush, and he still is one of their favorite characters, rivalling only the ageing Dixie Walker in popularity around Ebbets Field. Since it was the first pennant that Brooklyn had won in twenty-one years, the borough went crazy, and, for the few weeks preceding and during the baseball season, everyone in Brooklyn forgot the impending disaster of the war and gave prac-

tically all their attention to their beloved Dodgers.

Brooklyn disappointed its followers in 1942, but it was not Reese's fault. Although he still was potentially great and his arm often was uncontrollable, he played a marvelous shortstop for Durocher's club, and the team led the league until early September, when the Cardinals came up from nowhere, caught them, and captured the pennant.

It is history what the Cardinals did to Brooklyn in 1946, for, as in 1942, Brooklyn was far ahead of the field, and the St. Louis team had to come from behind again. That race ended in a precedent-shattering tie for the leadership on the last day of the 1946 season, and the pennant was decided in a two-out-of-three game play-off, which the Cardinals won in two straight games.

It is also history that the Dodgers nearly accomplished the impossible in the ninth inning of the second game when, behind, 8-1, they staged a sudden rally which only ended when Harry Brecheen of St. Louis was rushed into the game to snuff out a Brooklyn fire which nearly carried the Dodgers back into contention. Reese's part in that rally was the drawing of a walk from Murray Dickson, the starting Cardinals' pitcher. It was not the first time that Reese, a poor hitter, has

worked a harassed pitcher for a pass in a pinch, for, with Ed Stanky, the Brooklyn second baseman, Peewee, because of his peculiar crouch at the plate, is one of the hardest men in the majors to pitch to.

Reese, who celebrated his twenty-seventh birthday in July of 1946, has a puckish appearance which makes him look eternally young. His face is so smooth that he can go for two or three days without shaving, and he looks no older today than he did when he joined the Dodgers back in 1940. The result is that the Brooklyn fans, who take all of the Dodgers into their hearts, have a particularly soft spot for Peewee, who grinningly acknowledges their plaudits and their references to his youthful appearance.

A familiar scene around Ebbets Field is an exchange between the fans in the boxes near the field and Reese, at his shortstop post. Often, some rabid Dodger follower would yell in a raucous voice, "Hey, Peewee, have you had your milk today?"—and Reese always waves and nods his head, with a big smile on his face, to the delight of the crowd.

That, by the way, happens in New York, too, for the more enthusiastic of the Dodger fans will enter the hated gates of the Polo Grounds when

Brooklyn is playing there, only for the purpose of watching their beloved "Bums." Watching the Dodgers includes the privilege of asking the baby-faced Reese if he drank his milk that morning. It even happened in St. Louis in the first game of the play-off in 1946, when six hardy Brooklyn fans followed the team half-way across the country.

One of the most discussed features of the 1946 season was the question of how Durocher, with a team of nondescript ball players, ever managed to keep the Dodgers so high in the pennant race that it took a play-off before the Cardinals could win the flag. It has been pointed out that Durocher did a magnificent job of managing, for he did not have an outstanding club, and only his field generalship kept them in the fight.

However, fans and experts alike, in pointing out the great job that Durocher did in running the team, always make three exceptions when they say that the Dodgers did not have great ball players. The three are Walker, Bruce Edwards, the great rookie catcher—and Reese.

While Marion of the St. Louis Cardinals has always spread-eagled the field, Reese seemed to thrive on being away from baseball for three years. After he was released from the navy, he returned to the club in time for the 1946 season, and that

was far and away his best year. His throw across the diamond was just as fast as ever, but he no longer was wild. The result was, from all standpoints that 1946 was the year when Reese finally arrived as a peerless big league shortstop.

It was fortunate that he did, for, since he had left the team in 1942, Camilli retired and the Dodgers did not have a good first baseman in 1946. Reese, having become the great shortstop that he always had promised to be, steadied the entire Brooklyn infield, which, without him, would have been wobbly and spotty. Durocher often said during the season that the one man he could not afford to be without was Reese, and that, no doubt, was true.

Because of Marion, Peewee has had little chance to play in the annual All-Star games between the stars of the two major leagues. Marion, naturally, always got the nod as the National League's shortstop, and Reese always was chosen for the squad. Actually, he played in only one All-Star game, in 1942, and then as a replacement for Marion.

When Reese was a youngster, his two loves were marbles and baseball. His early baseball was played in a Louisville church league, and, looking back on it now, it is surprising that Peewee was not picked up by a professional team. In most

cases, ball players are spotted by big league scouts, who sign them up if they think they are potential major leaguers. Reese, although very young, was playing in a local league in a big city, yet he had to walk into the ball park and ask for a chance in order to get a tryout.

Considering the fact that, in common with many shortstops, Reese is not a good hitter, it is amazing how many runs he bats in every year. In 1946, for example, he was responsible for driving in over sixty runs while hitting only in the neighborhood of .280. That, incidentally, was his best year at the plate. Even at Louisville, he never hit over .279.

That his hitting is not essential to the welfare of the Dodgers can be attested by the fact that, when they won the pennant in 1941, Reese batted for a meager .228. Even then, despite the fact that he was one of the weakest hitters among the National League regulars, he batted in forty-six runs. He does not hit often, but when he comes through, it is with men on base. In spite of his lack of potency, Durocher would rather see him at bat when runs are needed than most of his other athletes, perhaps because the Dodger manager himself was that kind of a hitter in his active playing days.



When the baseball season is over, Reese and his wife, the former Dorothy Walton, whom he married in 1942, a few months before he went into the navy, usually take a vacation and then return to Louisville, where Peewee does what he pleases until it is time to report for spring training.

Reese is a ball player's ball player. He has no other major interest, although he is a fine golfer and loves to roam the links in the off season. He is also among Louisville's best bowlers, and frequents the bowling alleys of Louisville whenever he is in town.

He has managerial ambitions, and undoubtedly will get his chance when his playing days are over. That day is still far in the future, however, for, at twenty-seven he still seems to be in his 'teens, and, since he keeps himself in top physical condition all the year around, he is likely to become a twenty-year major league veteran before hanging up his glove.

With Dixie Walker nearing the end of his trail, Reese has become the backbone of the Brooklyn club. Branch Rickey, general manager of the Dodgers, and Durocher both think the world of Peewee, and he undoubtedly is last on their list as possible trading material.

He has become almost as much a part of Brook-

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lyn as Flatbush Avenue and Ebbets Field. Dodger fans would accept the trading or selling of almost anyone else, but they would probably commit mayhem on the Brooklyn front office if Reese should be allowed to slip away to another club.

So the future looks bright for the baby-faced boy from Louisville. He may look like a youngster, but he plays ball like a man, and, if he ever decides to run for office in Brooklyn, he can get himself elected to almost anything—provided he pulls up his Louisville stakes and takes up a residence in the vicinity of Flatbush.

### HAROLD H. REESE

Born, Ekron, Ky., July 23, 1919.

Bats right. Throws right. Height, 5 feet, 10 inches.

Weight, 160 pounds.

| Year             | Club                   | League      | Pos. | G   | AB  | R  | H   | HR | RBI | P.C. |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------|------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1938             | Louisville             | Amer. Assn. | SS   | 138 | 483 | 68 | 134 | 3  | 54  | .277 |
| 1939             | Louisville             | Amer. Assn. | SS   | 149 | 506 | 78 | 141 | 4  | 57  | .279 |
| 1940             | Brooklyn               | National    | SS   | 84  | 312 | 58 | 85  | 5  | 28  | .272 |
| 1941             | Brooklyn               | National    | SS   | 152 | 595 | 76 | 136 | 2  | 46  | .228 |
| 1942             | Brooklyn               | National    | SS   | 151 | 564 | 87 | 144 | 3  | 53  | .255 |
| 1943, 1944, 1945 | —In United States Navy |             |      |     |     |    |     |    |     |      |
| 1946             | Brooklyn               | National    | SS   | 151 | 542 | 78 | 155 | 5  | 59  | .286 |

### WORLD SERIES RECORD

|      |          |          |    |   |    |   |   |   |   |      |
|------|----------|----------|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1941 | Brooklyn | National | SS | 5 | 20 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | .200 |
|------|----------|----------|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|

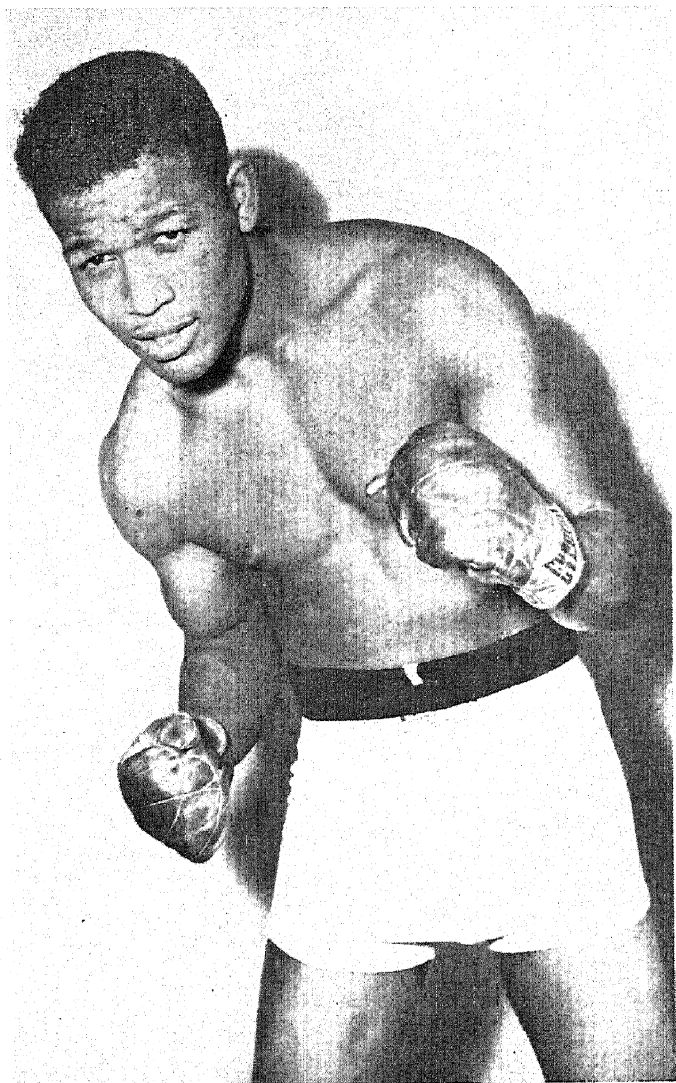
### ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

| Year | League   |    |  |   |   |   |   |   |      |
|------|----------|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1942 | National | SS |  | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 |

RAY ROBINSON

*“The Uncrowned King Is Coronated  
at Last”*





(SUGAR) RAY ROBINSON



## CHAPTER XIV

RAY ROBINSON

"THE UNCROWNED KING IS CORONATED AT LAST"

TO A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD boy the smells of the gymnasium were wonderful indeed. The unseen stream of arnica and the smell of linament's solace rebounded off the dirty walls and he breathed it in his nostrils as though it were pine-scented mountain air. His eyes widened as they bounced back and forth in rhythm with a punching bag. Those same dark eyes, swimming in whiteness, wandered about the room from fighter to fighter and finally rested on a handsome hulk of a large man who was finishing his workout by skipping rope in a corner.

The big man was really a boy, himself. He skipped rope with remarkable agility for his size, and the small boy watched with new wonder. The boxer caught the boy's eye and winked across the room to him. When he finished his workout, he crumpled the skip rope in his left hand, walked

across the floor, and extended his taped right fist to the lad.

"How are you, sonny," he asked as he shook hands. "My name's Joe Barrow. You gonna be a boxer?"

The boy's eyes widened the more at this honor. "Yeah," he said, suddenly making his mind up to his life's ambition right there. "Yeah. I'm gonna be a boxer. I'm Walker Smith."

That was in Detroit, in the Brewster Center Gym in Paradise Valley, the Harlem of the Motor City. The years passed and the scene shifted to the Harlem of New York, and to its downtown area in the vicinity of 50th Street and Eighth Avenue. Joe Barrow was there, only instead of Joseph Louis Barrow of Detroit, he was now Joe Louis, heavyweight champion of the world. And a grown-up Walker Smith was there, too, only instead of the wide-eyed youngster who watched wonderingly the sights of the Brewster Center Gym, he was now Sugar Ray Robinson, whose keen eyes and lightning fists had levelled down every opponent who dared to fight him, and who was recognized, pound for pound, as the greatest fighter in the world, save Joseph Louis Barrow.

The days in Paradise Valley were short ones in retrospect after that first meeting day in the gym-



nasium. Day after day the embryonic Ray Robinson would watch his hero skip the same rope, punch the familiar bags or hammer sparring opponents into even more familiar submission. The youngster would don light gloves, himself, on occasions, and the bigger boy would smile encouragement, and nod with a grin, "You gonna be a boxer, all right. You gonna be a boxer someday."

In 1932, while Ray Robinson still looked back twelve years to his birthdate on May 3, 1920, his mother moved from Detroit to New York, and the boy said good-bye to Brewster Center Gym and hello to Harlem. He quickly fell in with the life in that small crowded center of the big empty world, and the rhythm in his feet found an outlet dancing in the streets of the Negro settlement. Little Ray could dance. His feet moved with machine-gun rapidity and a much sweeter rhythm, and he loved to cut a rug, or a sidewalk as was more the case at the time. He danced for his living, but the money he could bring home to his mother was little and there still remained in his memory the smells of the gymnasium in Detroit, the staccato tapping of the punching bags, and the pin-up muscles of the big boxer who remained through the years his one idol in life.

When Ray was sixteen, finances were at ebb

tide for the little family from Detroit. His mother was taking in washing, and the boy helped her along by running grocery orders, shining shoes, and dancing for every dime, or penny, he could shake loose along Broadway or at more specialized bookings at parties in Harlem. During this period he was fighting to complete three years of high school.

It was then that memory, inspired by poverty, drove him into another gymnasium for the first time in four long years. It was the Salem-Crescent club into which Ray walked and tried to join the boxing class. On this first visit it was politely suggested that Ray go home and grow up. Returning a few months later, he did not bother to ask anyone about it, he merely put on a set of gloves and began to spar with his dancing feet spinning him about the floor. Trainer George Gainford was in the gym that day, and his keen eyes spotted Robinson at once and with a mystically magic process labelled him as talent. From that moment on, Ray Robinson was a fighter.

More correctly, from that moment on Ray Robinson was born. Little Walker Smith disappeared off the face of the earth, and a new personality took its place in the fight world with the christening ceremony of lacing on the first glove.

Gainford entered Ray in amateur bouts only a few weeks after his discerning gaze fell upon his true ability. The lanky colored boy was off then on a circuit of lefts and rights, of blood and sweat, which took him in and out of the rings of New York and the honky-tonk towns of the surrounding countryside, battling for unpaid fame, a medal or a watch, and, eventually for the petty cash these would bring in unfair exchange. There were blood and sweat for the youngster, Robinson, but there were no tears. In eighty-nine straight bouts of his four-year amateur career, he did not lose a fight. All were victories, sweet victories for the lanky, lean colored boy with the dancing feet.

It was while he was riding this rough circuit that Ray added the title of Sugar to his name. He was fighting one night in Watertown, New York, and with the poise and the rapid-fire punches of a master, he completely mastered one of the best Canadian amateur champions to cross the border.

A sports writer nudged Gainford as Ray's right hand was raised the victor. "You've sure got a sweet fighter," was the sports writer's comment.

"Yeah," replied Gainford. "Sweet as sugar."

The writer hopped onto that one, and the sweet-as-sugar Ray became Sugar Ray to the boxing world.

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All over the amateur circuit, the boxers fell before Sugar Ray's cane-like punches. On both the legitimate and bootleg amateur circuits he was unbeatable. Fights that have never been entered in any record book were won by Sugar Ray. On the record he was credited with sixty-three knock-outs in his eighty-nine victories and forty of the kayoes came in the first round. In 1939 he waltzed through the featherweight competition for the Golden Gloves title and in 1940 he moved up to the lightweight class and to another championship.

He was the sensation of the amateur ranks. Every boxer he made his target was soon a sleeping target. Every title he reached for he plucked with his long grasp. He was a grown boy by the time his 1940 triumph was written into the books. He stood now at five feet eleven inches tall, thin and lanky for a boxer, but nevertheless well proportioned. In his feet there was lightning; in his two rapid-fire hands there was dynamite.

Nobody knew this better than Gainford, who decided it was time for Ray Robinson to turn professional.

On the night of October 4, 1940, Madison Square Garden was pretty well filled. Yet only a few in the crowd nodded any sign of familiarity

when Ray Robinson's name was announced. The throng had come to see the main bout between Henry Armstrong and Fritzie Zivic for the former's welterweight title. Ray Robinson was merely a preliminary boy that night, fighting a guy named Joe Echevarria.

"Makin' his perfessional daybue," said the announcer as he introduced Robinson to his new audience. The fans sat back in their seats. It was too bad that the Armstrong-Zivic main bout had taken so very much of their attention and interest that night, for more might have noticed the skill the lanky Negro preliminary boy demonstrated. Like the spectators, Ray was anxious to see Henry Armstrong in action. Along with Joe Louis, he had made this little welterweight wonder one of his heroes, and he had no time to waste on Echevarria this particular evening.

During the first round Ray merely softened his victim up. The pro game that night was no different than the amateurs. Ray peppered his opponent with rights and lefts, and then suddenly in the second round he let fly the haymaker. Echevarria went down—and out. And Ray Robinson had his hand raised in professional triumph for the first time and then danced out of the ring right to his dressing room. When the main bout en-

tered the ring, he was squatting at ringside waiting for Armstrong to duplicate his efforts and win.

The joy of victory left Ray Robinson like the drop of an elevator during those next few minutes. Right before his very eyes, Sugar Ray saw Armstrong, his hero, absorb a cutting beating. Blood flowed and the fire of Zivic's punches echoed in Ray's still young ears. He was filled with a strange emotion—a disgust born of misery and he found himself facing another opponent that same evening—a temptation to quit the ring right then and there.

Robinson walked with his head down among the crowd as it filed from the Garden that night. Nobody would ever have picked him as a youngster who had just won his first professional fight. He meandered through the lobby, still thinking, yet tempted. He thought of Henry Armstrong. He thought of Ray Robinson. He thought of Walker Smith, a dancer.

And then he quickly decided to stay in the ring. "Someday," he told himself, "someday—I'll square things for Henry with that Zivic."

There was still a long row of unknowns to be kayoed first, however, and Ray went about the business of hopping from city to city and from victory to victory that mapped the trail of his rise

to prominence. Someone named Silent Stefford had the honor of becoming his second pro victim in the second round in Savannah, Georgia four days after Mr. Echevarria collapsed in New York. Through the remainder of the year 1940 and the early months of 1941 Ray's trail blazed along the cities of the Eastern seaboard from New York, through Atlantic City to Washington, and the names of his victims sang like the clickety clack of the trains on the rails that carried him into and out of the rings of those towns of triumph—Mitsos Gripsos—Oliver White—George Zangaras—Jimmy Tygh—Joe Ghnouly—Pete Lello. These were only a few of the names that were racked up in Sugar Ray Robinson's first twenty victories—seventeen of which were of the knockout variety.

For number twenty-one they rounded up a good man for Sugar Ray. Sammy Angott was then the National Boxing Association's lightweight champion of the world, headed for a later victory over Lew Jenkins and an undisputed claim to the world's title. The fight throng figured he would stop the lanky Negro boy and put an end to that record of his when they were matched for a non-title bout in Shibe Park, Philadelphia, on January 21, 1941.

Nine months after he had turned professional,

Sugar Ray climbed through the ropes and sat in his corner facing one of the great fighters of the day. It was fantastic.

It was the more fantastic when Sugar Ray Robinson won.

The crowd that night sat with eyes and mouths wide open. None could believe it. For ten rounds—the first time in his life that Robinson had ever gone ten full rounds—he beat a tattoo on the champion's face and body. For ten rounds—ten rounds which he mastered as only a veteran fighter ordinarily could—he beat Angott all over the ring with complete thoroughness. And when the ten rounds were ended, a still fresh and eager Ray Robinson stood in his corner while the referee pointed and acknowledged what everyone already knew—that he was the winner of his first major fight.

Three more knockout victories followed running Robinson's unbroken string to twenty-four with those eighty-nine amateur victories still serving as a barricade to the fact that he had never been beaten in a ring. Number twenty-five for Ray was a decision, gained clearly over Marty Servo, who in the bitter ridiculousness of the future was to gain the world's welterweight title ahead of Sugar Ray.



After the Servo fight, there was only one opponent suitable for Robinson to meet. They merely mentioned the name Fritzie Zivic to him and his eyes lit up. Just one year and twenty-seven days from that unforgettable night when he had begun his professional career and moaned when he saw Zivic make mincemeat of the aging Henry Armstrong, Sugar Ray Robinson found the entree to the same ring with Zivic, himself. Even the fact that Fritzie had since lost the welterweight title to Red Cochrane could not dim Ray's joy at the prospects of the bout.

Robinson climbed through the ropes six and one-half pounds lighter than the former champion. Zivic was a rough, tough, competent fighter. He had been brought up fighting in Pittsburgh, and he had battled his way to and through the welterweight title the hard way. What was most important, he boasted years of experience over his still youthful opponent. Zivic, said the fight mob, would stop this Robinson and his record.

From the very first bell of the fight, it was evident that the crowd, again, was wrong and that Robinson, again, was right. He met Zivic on his own ground, roughing it up, and he outroughed him. He met him punch for punch, and he outpunched him. In the seventh round, Zivic landed

a terrific punch on Ray's jaw, rocked him back into the ropes. "Now we'll find out if Robinson can take it," murmured the crowd. Robinson could. He came back in the eighth round to dish out some hard body punishment of his own. He dominated the ninth round, and finished so strongly in the tenth that the decision was unanimous.

Sugar Ray Robinson had punched out his place as the logical contender for the welterweight championship of the world.

There and then began one of the most disgraceful exhibitions of title-dodging in the annals of the ring.

Cochrane refused to fight him. Everyone who had the slightest insight of the situation between the ropes of the welterweight ring was convinced that Robinson would have lifted the crown off Cochrane's red head, if ever he had been permitted to aim his fist at the champion's chin. But fast as he was in the ring and as tricky as were his dancing feet, Robinson was never quick enough to catch Cochrane.

Ray fought Zivic again, and knocked him out in ten rounds, to erase any traces of the word accident which might have lingered after their first bout. He whipped Marty Servo again, licked

Sammy Angott a second time and splattered the hopes and the bodies of enough other boxers into the resin to mount his victory slate up to forty in a row, carrying through the end of the year 1942. Number thirty-six in his string had been a ten-round decision over Jake LaMotta, the middleweight of one of the great boxing families in the game.

Number forty-one also was to have been Jake. He and Sugar Ray met for the second time in a Detroit ring. Ray gave away fifteen pounds in weight that night, but he had done that before and won. The night of February 5, 1943 was different. Jake LaMotta won.

Ray Robinson was beaten for the first time in his boxing career—the end of a trail of 129 triumphs as amateur and professional. To this writing it remains as the only defeat on his shield. On May 14, 1945 in Philadelphia, one Jose Basora held Ray to a draw. He remains as the only one with whom Sugar Ray has not adequately squared accounts. He whipped LaMotta three times after that defeat to make the score of their meetings 4-1 in his favor.

He whipped LaMotta, and he wandered in and out of Boston, Detroit, Chicago and New York beating the daylights out of all others who dared

meet him. He was recognized everywhere as the uncrowned champion of the world. A fight manager would come up with a good youngster and would sing his boasts about his new prospect.

"This kid can lick anyone in the business up as far as the light-heavies," the manager might boast.

"Including Robinson?" someone might inquire.

"Well, except Robinson, of course."

It was always "except Robinson, of course." Pound for pound, he was rated as the greatest fighter in the world. Louis, alone, was rated as better than he. Louis, alone, it was said, could lick him.

Still he remained the uncrowned champion. Cochrane had entered the United States Navy with the coming of war and had taken the title with him for the duration. Robinson, in 1944, entered the army, and when finally the war was over and the spotlight could again rest on ring wars, it seemed only fair that Sugar Ray should have his chance at last at the championship.

But Cochrane came out of the navy with another idea. He put the title up for sale, offering to fight the one who would offer him the best cash trade in for the crown. Marty Servo, twice-beaten by Robinson, was the lucky winner of Cochrane's

beneficence and Robinson was frozen out of the picture again. To cool him off a little longer, they agreed that whoever won the bout should next meet Sugar Ray and give him his chance then. That was the only reason anyone cared at all when Servo won and became the most questionable champion in the history of the game. The fight world wanted to see what he would then do about the Robinson situation.

Marty and his manager, Al Weill, had the answer. First of all they signed to fight Rocky Graziano, the middleweight, at an over-the-weight, non-title bout, and the welterweight champion was knocked from his throne by the rough little Mr. Graziano. Servo was then matched to meet Robinson, but none of the inhabitants of the boxing world were terribly surprised when just before the scheduled bout, he discovered that he was suffering from a deviated septum and requested a postponement. When the postponement date finally drew near, Servo resigned and retired from the ring.

The logical thing then would have been to hand the title to Robinson, but it was decided to conduct a series of eliminations for the empty throne. The eliminations took a bad beating when no brave customer could be uncovered who cared or

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dared to battle Robinson, but finally Tommy Bell, a game guy from Youngstown, Ohio, gave a "we who are about to die" salute and volunteered to make the match.

Sugar Ray had beaten Bell once previously, in January of 1945, but to the challenger's credit he fought gamely in the championship battle of December 20, 1946. But Bell could not, nor could anyone fighting today, with the exception of Joe Louis, stop Robinson from reaching at last the crown which had eluded him for five years.

Sugar Ray won a unanimous decision, and the uncrowned champion was coronated at last.

That was a happy night for Sugar Ray Robinson, champion. Through the long years he had looked always to champion Joe Louis as his idol, and he wanted in a measure to know the satisfaction that Joe claimed as the heavyweight king of the world. Sugar Ray could and did often look back upon that day in Paradise Valley, fourteen years before, when he shook hands with Joe Barrow and said "I'm Walker Smith. I'm gonna be a fighter, too."

They both were fighters now. They both were champions, and Sugar Ray Robinson smiled at the realization of it. What great champions, what complete champions, those two Negro boys from

Paradise Valley really are was best shown by the ratings issued at the turn of the New Year 1947 by the National Boxing Association. In every other weight class, the association listed the name of a champion followed by the names of other fighters who had the right to challenge for the title and might even upset the title-holder; but in the heavyweight and welterweight brackets, it simply was written, "Champions:—Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson." And beneath that, as a fitting tribute to the mastery and superiority of the two over their fellow men of the ring, was added:—

"Logical contenders for their titles:—None."

#### RAY ROBINSON

Born Detroit, Mich. Welterweight, Height 5 ft. 11 in. Nationality American Negro. Won Golden Gloves featherweight championship in 1939. Lightweight title in 1940 in New York.

##### 1940

Oct. 4, Joe Echevarria, N. Y. C., KO 2; Oct. 8, Silent Stefford, Savannah, KO 2; Oct. 22 Mitsos Gripsos, N. Y. C., W 6; Nov. 11, Bobby Woods, Philadelphia, KO 1; Dec. 9, Norment Quarles, Philadelphia, KO 4; Dec. 12, Oliver White, N. Y. C., KO 3.

##### 1941

Jan. 4, Henry LaBarba, Brooklyn, KO 1; Jan. 13, Frankie Wallace, Philadelphia, KO 1; Jan. 31, George Zangaras, N. Y. C., W 6; Feb. 8, Benny Cartagena, Brooklyn, KO 1; Feb. 21, Bobby McIntyre, N. Y. C., W 6; Feb. 27, Gene Spencer, Detroit, KO 5; March 3, Jimmy Tygh, Philadelphia, KO 8; April 4, Jimmy Tygh, Philadelphia, KO 1; April 24, Charley Burns, Atlantic City, KO 1; April 30, Joe Ghnouly, Washington, KO 3; May 10, Vic Troise, Brooklyn, KO 1; May 19, Nick Castiglione, Philadelphia, KO 1; June 16, Mike Evans, Philadelphia, KO 2; July 2, Pete Lello, N. Y. C., KO 4; July 21, Sammy Angott, Philadelphia, W 10; Aug. 27, Red Guggino, L. I. C., KO 3; Aug. 29, Maurice Arnault,

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Atlantic City, KO 1; Sept. 19, Maxie Shapiro, N. Y. C., KO 3; Sept. 25, Marty Servo, Philadelphia, W 10; Oct. 31, Fritzie Zivic, N. Y. C., W 10.

1942

Jan. 16, Fritzie Zivic, N. Y. C., KO 10; Feb. 20, Maxie Berger, N. Y. C., KO 2; March 20, Norman Rubio, N. Y. C., KO 7; April 17, Harvey Dubs, Detroit, KO 6; April 30, Dick Banner, Minneapolis, KO 2; May 28, Marty Servo, N. Y. C., W 10; July 31, Sammy Angott, N. Y. C., W 10; Aug. 21, Rueben Shank, N. Y. C., KO 2; Aug. 27, Tony Motisi, Chicago, KO 1; Oct. 2, Jake LaMotta, N. Y. C., W 10; Oct. 19, Izzy Jannazzo, Philadelphia W 10; Nov. 6, Vic Dellicurtti, N. Y. C., W 10; Dec. 1, Izzy Jannazzo, Cleveland, KO 8; Dec. 14, Al Nettlow, Philadelphia, KO 3.

1943

Feb. 5, Jake LaMotta, Detroit, L 10; Feb. 19, Jackie Wilson, N. Y. C., W 10; Feb. 26, Jake LaMotta, Detroit, W 10; April 30, Freddie Cabral, Boston, KO 1; July 1, Ralph Zannelli, Boston, W 10; Aug. 27, Henry Armstrong, N. Y. C., W 10.

1944

Oct. 13, Izzy Jannazzo, Boston, KO 2; Oct. 27, Sgt. Lou Woods, Chicago, KO 9; Nov. 17, Vic Dellicurtti, Detroit, W 10; Dec. 12, Sheik Rangel, Philadelphia, KO 2; Dec. 22, Georgie Martin, Boston, KO 7.

Entered U. S. Army.

1945

Jan. 10, Billy Furrone, Washington, KO 2; Jan. 16, Tommy Bell, Cleveland, W 10; Feb. 14, George Costner, Chicago, KO 1; Feb. 23, Jake LaMotta, New York, W 10; May 14, Jose Basora, Philadelphia, D 10; June 15, Jimmy McDaniels, N. Y. C., KO 2; Sept. 18, Jimmy Mandell, Buffalo, KO 5; Sept. 26, Jake LaMotta, Chicago, W 12; Dec. 4, Vic Dellicurtti, Boston, W 10.

1946

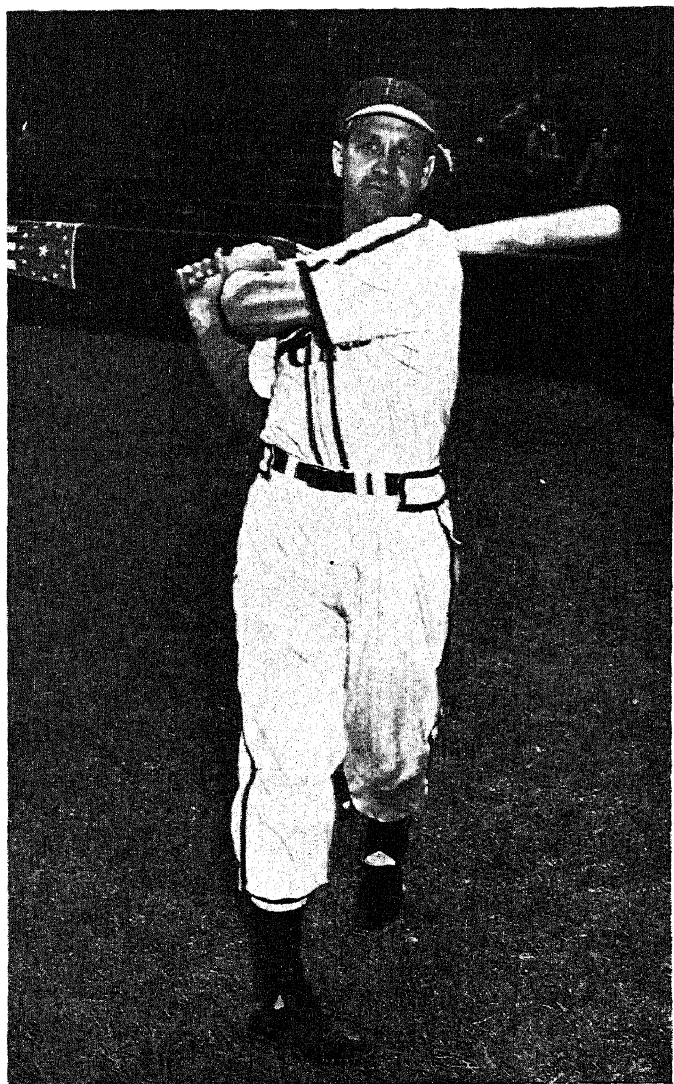
Jan. 15, Dave Clark, Pittsburgh, KO 2; Feb. 6, Tony Riccio, Elizabeth, KO 4; Feb. 16, O'Neill Bell, Detroit, KO 2; Feb. 28, Cliff Beckett, St. Louis, KO 4; March 5, Sammy Angott, Pittsburgh, W 10; Mar. 14, Izzy Jannazzo, Baltimore, W 10; March 22, Freddie Flores, N. Y. C., KO 5; June 13, Freddie Wilson, Worcester, KO 2; June 26, Norman Rubio, Union City, W 10; July 12, Joe Curcio, N. Y. C., KO 2; Aug. 15, Vinnie Vines, Albany, KO 6; Sept. 26, Sidney Miller, Elizabeth, KO 3; Oct. 4, Ossie Harris, Pittsburgh, W 10; Nov. 2 Cecil Hudson, Detroit, KO 6; Nov. 7, Artie Levine, Cleveland, KO 10; Dec. 21, Tommy Bell, N. Y. C., W 15 (Won world's welterweight championship).



ENOS BRADSHER SLAUGHTER

*“He Stole a World Series”*





ENOS BRADSHER (COUNTRY) SLAUGHTER



## CHAPTER XV

ENOS BRADSHER SLAUGHTER  
"HE STOLE A WORLD SERIES"

**I**F ENOS SLAUGHTER never does anything sensational again or if he had never done anything sensational before, his name will live as long as baseball does for his mad dash which won the seventh game of the World Series and clinched the 1946 title for the St. Louis Cardinals against the Boston Red Sox.

Slaughter was always a great, game outfielder, whose courage was never questioned and who, during his major league career, has won many a game for the Cardinals. But, when, as underdogs, the St. Louis club came twice from behind to capture the title from a highly favored Red Sox team, it was Slaughter who provided the great thrill of the series and one of the great thrills of all baseball history.

Actually, Slaughter, and his team-mate, the left-handed pitcher, Harry Brecheen, almost won the World Series of 1946 singlehanded. Brecheen

won three games, his third victory coming dramatically, as he pitched two crucial innings in the seventh and last game. But, if Slaughter had not taken one of the longest gambles of all time in baseball—and won—the Red Sox might have managed to overcome their rivals from St. Louis.

The fortunate 34,000 fans and 600-odd newspapermen, photographers and radio folk who saw that seventh game in Sportman's Park in St. Louis, as well as the millions of fans who listened to it on the air will never forget Slaughter's coup d'état. The setting was perfect for a World Series climax, for the 1946 classic had gone the limit.

Each club had won three games. In the Cardinals' half of the eighth inning, the score was tied, 3-3, and Bob Klinger, the Pittsburgh castoff who had become one of the leading relief pitchers on the Red Sox staff, was on the mound for Boston. Slaughter was the first man up for St. Louis, and, despite a painful elbow injury which he had suffered in the fifth game of the series, he was still in there for Manager Eddie Dyer's men, playing a great right field and always dangerous at the plate. He singled off Klinger, and then, as Whitey Kurowski and Del Rice went out in order, it appeared as if the Cardinals would not be able to get him any further than first base.

Harry Walker, a left-handed hitter and younger brother of the great Dixie Walker of the Brooklyn Dodgers, was at the plate. Walker had already obtained one hit and batted in one of the three Cardinals' runs. Klinger worked very carefully on him, and, constantly, he turned and threw to first to keep the fast Slaughter close to the bag.

Finally, Walker picked out a pitch to his liking and drove it on a line to left center field. It gave every appearance of being an ordinary single, the kind of ball which would advance a runner to second, or, if he were unusually fast, to third base. Both Ted Williams, the Red Sox left fielder, and Leon Culberson, the center fielder who had replaced the injured Dominic DiMaggio, hurt earlier in the game, went after the ball.

Culberson got there first, picked it up, and threw it in to Johnny Pesky, the Boston shortstop, who had moved out as the ball was hit to take a throw in case Culberson decided to toss the ball to him instead of to third.

The Red Sox center fielder worked fast. As he picked up the ball, he realized that Slaughter could not be stopped from reaching third, for the speedy Cardinal was already around second and heading for the hot corner. So Culberson threw the ball on a line to Pesky, so that the little Red Sox short

fielder could relay to the plate, purely as a precautionary measure.

Slaughter got to third base at just about the same time that Pesky caught the throw from Culberson. Coaching on third was wily old Mike Gonzalez, the tall Cuban who, for many years, had been acknowledged as one of the smartest third base coaches in the game. While the fans in the stands and everyone who had a clear view of Gonzalez sucked in their breaths, big Mike waved Slaughter to the plate. Gonzalez did not hesitate a second. He beckons nervously and rapidly when he wants a man to go home and, in spite of the fact that the chances were 1000-1 against Slaughter scoring, Gonzalez never stopped waving his hand.

Slaughter never stopped running. The Cardinal outfielder rounded third at full speed and set sail for home on the long, mad gamble that he could make it, and give Brecheen a one-run margin on which to work when the little left-hander went back to pitch the ninth inning for the Redbirds.

Bobby Doerr, the Red Sox second baseman and field captain, sensed what was happening, and he screamed to Pesky to throw home. The noise at Sportsman's Park was so loud, however, that Pesky did not hear him. The Sox shortstop hesitated only a fraction of a second before he turned to see



where Slaughter was, and that fraction of a second cost the Red Sox victory in the series.

Still, by the time Pesky turned to make the throw, Slaughter had a long way to go before reaching home. A slower base runner could have been caught. Even Slaughter could have been nabbed at the plate if Pesky had been set to make a fast relay. But Pesky was off balance, and he had to make a hurried throw to Roy Partee, the Red Sox catcher, who, mask off and glove waiting, was set to make a play at the plate.

Pesky's throw was fast, but wide of its mark. Partee had to reach to the first base side of home, and then swing around and dive for Slaughter. The tiny flash of time which it took Partee to make that dive was just enough to allow the game Slaughter to slide by him safely, and score the daring, typically Cardinals' run which meant the series.

That one play alone characterized the type of ball player that Slaughter is. Always ready to take a chance, fast enough to turn odds in his favor, courageous enough to dive head first, if he had to, to reach a base, Slaughter has been one of the reasons why, for years, the Cardinals have always been dangerous pennant contenders.

Slaughter has made plays like that before, and

he will again. But the fact that he made this almost lunatic dash from first base on what would normally have been a single (although Walker's hit was officially scored as a double) in the dying moments of a seven-game World Series put Slaughter's name into the encyclopedia of baseball thrills for all time.

Anyone else but Slaughter probably would not even have played in the seventh game of the World Series, or the sixth, either, for that matter. In the fourth inning of the fifth game, the last 1946 series contest that was played in Boston, the Cardinals' right fielder was hit squarely on the elbow by a fast ball pitched by Joe Dobson of the Red Sox. Slaughter played for two more innings of that game, but the elbow swelled up so badly that he had to retire.

Fortunately for the Cardinals, the next day was an off day, since both teams were on the road back to St. Louis, where the series was to be resumed. For a time, Dyer toyed with the idea of flying Slaughter back to the Mound City, but he finally decided to let his star travel by train with the rest of the club. Enos spent the entire trip in his bedroom on the train, nursing his elbow, in a frantic effort to have it ready for the sixth game.

By normal standards, the elbow was still in such

bad shape that Slaughter had no right to play any more baseball during the series. The injury was on his right arm, and Slaughter throws right-handed. He has long been famous for having one of the greatest arms possessed by any outfielder in baseball. If he were forced to throw the ball in a hurry, he could, conceivably, ruin his arm forever, as far as playing ball was concerned.

But, in the face of doctors' orders to the contrary, and great apprehension on the part of his manager, Slaughter insisted upon finishing the series. Dyer did arrange to have Red Schoendienst, his second baseman, run well into right field whenever a ball was hit there, so that any relay throws made by Slaughter would be as short as possible, but Slaughter did not even take advantage of that. In the last two games of the series, he threw the ball on a dead line to Schoendienst when he had to and, on one occasion in the sixth game, he threw home in a vain attempt to catch a runner scoring from third base on a fly to right field, and the pain was so obviously excruciating that the whole crowd flinched when he made the throw.

Enos Bradsher Slaughter was born and brought up in the little community of Roxboro, North Carolina, and, in the off season, he still spends a great deal of his time in that neighborhood, where

he loves to hunt and fish in season. His legal residence is St. Louis, but, actually, except when he is playing ball, he rarely visits the Mound City. After the outdoor season prevents his using rod and gun, he usually goes south and waits there to report to the Cardinals' spring training camp in St. Petersburg, Florida, in late February.

In common with so many southern youngsters, Slaughter began to play baseball almost as soon as he began to walk. He loved the game and he spent as much time on the diamond as he did in the classroom when he was a boy. Before he was 16, his mind was made up that baseball was not only his game, but his profession, as well, and he turned his back on any further formal education.

He was playing semi-pro ball around Roxboro when he was first discovered by one of the best and least-known scouts in the game, Frank Rickey, brother of Branch. At the time, Branch was general manager of the Cardinals and emperor of their farm club system, and he now acts in the same capacity for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Frank was a self-effacing man who shunned the spotlight and spent most of his time deep in the heart of the "sticks," looking for potential baseball stars. Many of the men who later were to become famous with the Cardinals were unearthed by him,

a patient, kind man who liked nothing better than to bask in the reflected glory of some outstanding ball player whom he had first discovered. Slaughter was one of Frank's "boys."

In 1934, Slaughter was playing around Roxboro and working on his father's farm. Rickey liked his style. The boy was raw, far from a finished ball player, a tough, tobacco-chewing kid whose greatest virtue was courage and a tendency, even then, to take a gamble on the diamond, provided he saw the least chance of winning. What Rickey liked most about him was his speed, for Cardinals' managers for years have searched for fast, hustling ball players. To this day, that is a Cardinal trade mark.

Slaughter was delighted to get into the Cardinal chain, and, in 1935, he spent his first year in organized baseball, cavorting in the outfield for Martinsville in the Bi-State League, a small town in a tiny circuit which only ball players and the people in the immediate section have ever heard of. Enos hit fairly well, compiling a .273 average, but his speed and his desire to make good impressed the Cardinals so much that they promoted him to their Class AAA farm in Columbus, in the American Association.

That .273 batting average in Martinsville marked one of the two occasions during Slaugh-

ter's entire baseball career when he failed to bat for .300 or more. The only other time he missed these magic batting figures was in 1938, his first year with the Cardinals.

The National League was never the heavy-hitting league of major league baseball. A .300 hitter in that circuit always is among the first ten batters in the league, and Slaughter thus was always one of the top sluggers in the loop, although he never actually led it in batting.

He spent two years at Columbus and, during his second, he slugged the ball to the tune of .382 to lead the American Association in batting. That was all the Cardinals wanted to know. This kid was not only fast, but he could hit, and the St. Louis front office hesitated no longer in bringing Slaughter to the parent club.

So, in 1938, when he was twenty-two years old, just four years after the modest Frank Rickey had plucked him out of obscurity, Slaughter became a big leaguer. He has been one ever since, and he gives every appearance of being capable of remaining in the major leagues for many more years to come, for, at thirty, he was at the peak of his career in the 1946 World Series.

The record books, as always, fail to tell the complete story of Slaughter's value to the Cardinals.

He rarely led the National League in any hitting or fielding departments, although his fifty-two doubles in 1939 topped the circuit in that respect and, in 1942, he led in base hits with 188. His batting average, except for his first year, has always ranged between .300 and .320, and any outfielder who can compile those figures consistently over a period of half a dozen playing years is a valuable man to have around.

The Cardinals were edged out for the 1941 pennant by the Brooklyn Dodgers and, to this day, ardent St. Louis fans claim that the only reason they failed to win the flag that year was because Slaughter broke his collarbone on August 11 and was out for five weeks. The fact that he returned to the lineup at all that season was mute testimony to his courage. Virtually anyone else in baseball would have been out for the season after that type of injury.

But Enos did get into a World Series before he went into the U. S. Army Air Corps. In 1942, Manager Billy Southworth led the Redbirds to a pennant, and Slaughter was one of his stars. Although Slaughter enlisted in the service in August of that year he was not called to active duty until February of 1943, so he completed the 1942 season and not only took part in, but had a great deal to

do with, the Cardinals' victory in the World Series over the mighty New York Yankees. That was a series which found the Yankees winning the first game and St. Louis winning the next four in succession.

Slaughter saved the second game of the series for St. Louis with two remarkable throws from his right field position. The second one, which went to third base and enabled Whitey Kurowski, the Cardinals' third baseman, to tag out Tuck Stainback in the eighth inning, with the Cardinals leading by one run, stopped a Yanks' rally, which, if successful, would have sent the series back to New York with the Yanks leading, 2-0, in games. In the fifth and final game, Slaughter's fourth inning home run put the game into a tie, and set the stage for a Cardinals' victory that clinched and ended the series.

Slaughter's last year before going to war was his best in the majors. Besides leading the league in hits, he led the loop in three-base hits, as well, and, of course, was a key man in the Cardinals' World Series victory, just as he was four years later when they surprised the baseball world by beating the Red Sox. As a result, Slaughter was named to The Sporting News' All-Star game for his 1942 feats on the diamond.



Three times, Slaughter has appeared in All-Star games, involving the stars of the American and National Leagues. He took part in the 1941 and 1942 contests, and, in 1946, he was among those present in the National League outfield when the game was played at Fenway Park in Boston. That, by the way, was the first time Slaughter had ever seen Fenway Park, the scene of the elbow injury he suffered during the series.

Slaughter's baseball nickname is "Country," and the name has stuck with him throughout his career. Various men have been given credit for giving him the cognomen, but it is generally believed that the originator of the term was Frank Rickey, who took Slaughter right off the farm in Roxboro and put him into baseball. Another interpretation was that he got the name from the fact that he could, speaking colloquially, "hit a ball a country mile."

Even though Slaughter calls St. Louis his adopted home, his heart is still in Roxboro, not only because he visits there every year, but because, a few years ago, he was made an honorary member of the local fire department, and some of his best friends in the town are his fellow firemen.

He will probably spend the remainder of his baseball career with the Cardinals. Owner Sam

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Breadon and Manager Eddie Dyer are always ready to make a deal, if they think it will help the club, but both have reiterated time and again that Slaughter would be among the last to go. He will be around for a long time to plague future Cardinal rivals.

### ENOS BRADSHER SLAUGHTER

Born, Roxboro, N. C., April 27, 1916.

Bats left. Throws right. Height, 5 feet, 9 inches. Weight, 178 pounds.

| Year             | Club                             | League      | Pos. | G   | AB  | R   | H   | HR | RBI | P.C. |
|------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1935             | Martinsville                     | Bi-State    | OF   | 109 | 422 | 68  | 115 | 18 | ... | .273 |
| 1936             | Columbus                         | Amer. Assn. | OF   | 151 | 569 | 106 | 185 | 9  | 118 | .325 |
| 1937             | Columbus                         | Amer. Assn. | OF   | 154 | 642 | 147 | 245 | 26 | 122 | .382 |
| 1938             | St. Louis                        | National    | OF   | 112 | 395 | 59  | 109 | 8  | 58  | .276 |
| 1939             | St. Louis                        | National    | OF   | 149 | 604 | 95  | 193 | 12 | 86  | .320 |
| 1940             | St. Louis                        | National    | OF   | 140 | 516 | 96  | 158 | 17 | 73  | .306 |
| 1941             | St. Louis                        | National    | OF   | 113 | 425 | 71  | 132 | 13 | 76  | .311 |
| 1942             | St. Louis                        | National    | OF   | 152 | 591 | 100 | 188 | 13 | 98  | .318 |
| 1943, 1944, 1945 | —In United States Army Air Corps |             |      |     |     |     |     |    |     |      |
| 1946             | St. Louis                        | National    | OF   | 155 | 605 | 99  | 183 | 18 | 131 | .302 |

### WORLD SERIES RECORDS

|      |           |          |    |   |    |   |   |   |   |      |
|------|-----------|----------|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1942 | St. Louis | National | OF | 5 | 19 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | .263 |
| 1946 | St. Louis | National | OF | 7 | 25 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 | .320 |

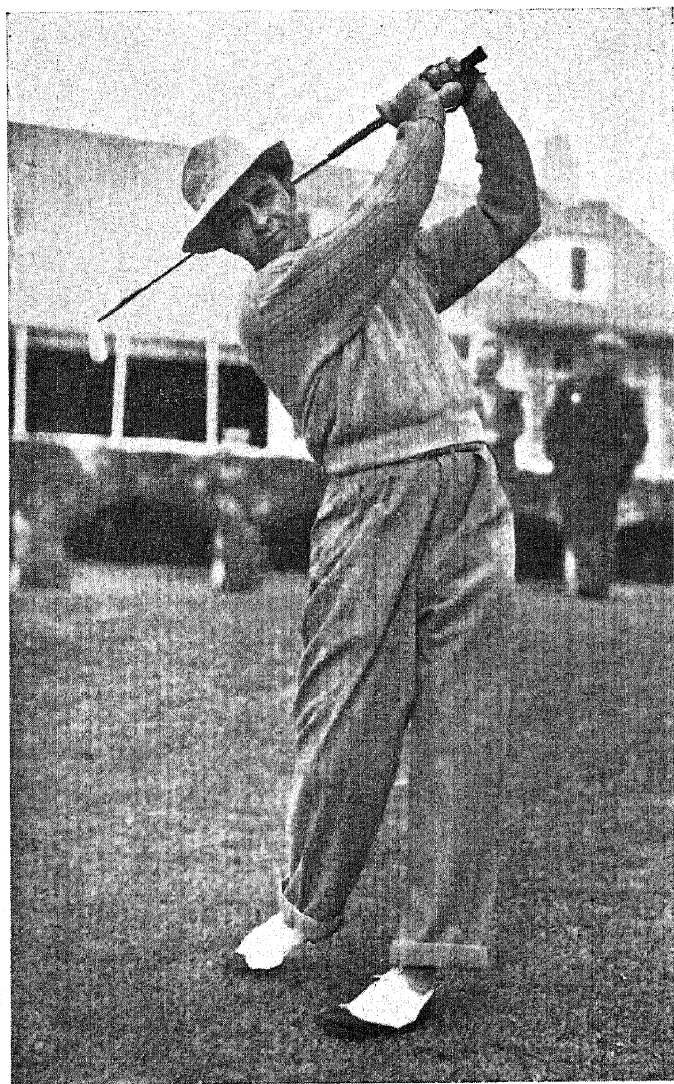
### ALL-STAR GAME RECORDS

| Year | League   |    |   |   |   |   |   |      |
|------|----------|----|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1941 | National | OF | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .500 |
| 1942 | National | OF | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .500 |
| 1946 | National | OF | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 |

SAMUEL (SAMMY) SNEAD

*“King of the Links”*





SAMUEL (SAMMY) SNEAD

*Wide World Photo*



## CHAPTER XVI

SAMUEL (SAMMY) SNEAD  
"KING OF THE LINKS"

EVERY time a duffer makes or misses a golf shot, the chances are about ninety-nine out of one hundred that he will pay verbal tribute to Sammy Snead. If he gets hold of one and reaches a faraway green, he will very likely turn to the rest of his foursome and say, "Only Snead and I could make a shot like that." If he misses one, he will undoubtedly punctuate a few well-chosen golf words with the announcement, "Only Snead could have made that blankety blank shot, anyhow."

Whenever a golfer, duffer or pro, thinks in the terms of long hitting, it is second nature to think of Sammy Snead. The drawling, soft-spoken West Virginian with the short name is practically a synonym for drives that travel cross-country style down the fairways of the world, for iron shots that whiz with the power of a transcontinental airliner and travel almost as far. For color on the golf course, few can record better scores than Sammy

Snead. His unspoiled naturalness has long been a magnet for the galleries, so much so that at major tournaments, even when "Slammin' Sam" is not down with the low scorers, his shots are witnessed by sizable crowds. And on those occasions many of the people who follow the player who is hot and seemingly headed for victory will agree, "We'll follow this fellow for a spell, then cut back and pick up Snead." Win, lose or draw, they love to watch Sammy hit them. With golf galleries he enjoys the same popularity and esteem in which Frank Sinatra is held by the modern-day bobby sox brigade.

To these countless members of the Sammy Snead fan and marching club, their hero is a mixture of attractions. He is Snead, the champion, winner of the class-packed P.G.A. championship of 1942, and Snead, the British Open king of 1946. He is also the Snead, who took a hacker's eight on the 72nd and final hole of the 1939 United States Open tournament of 1939. But whether he is knocking off the heads of his opposition with his woods and irons, or, on those rare occasions, missing them completely, Sammy is still the glamor boy of the links. The crowds love to see him win, and they love him little less when he dubs one, gives himself a one-minute tongue lashing in certain terms, then breaks out with his patented grin



and steps forward to play his next shot as though nothing had happened. And despite the full measure of international fame his sterling game has gained him, he is still the hillbilly of golf. When, in July of 1946, he annexed the British title to his lengthy list, the stories and broadcasts winging their way back to the United States by cable and radio did not hail him as a "former American P.G.A. champion," or anything like that. They simply said that "Sammy Snead, the American hillbilly from West Virginia, won the British Open title today," et cetera.

Snead was born in the dignified community of Hot Springs, Virginia, in May of 1913, and he was born to the golfing world twenty-four years later, in 1937, when he won the Oakland, California, Open and the annual Bing Crosby tournament during the Pacific Coast portion of the professionals' winter circuit. Sammy had first taken to golf when he was fifteen and had become a caddy at the Hot Springs course near his home. Seven years later, he had decided that golf would be his career in life, and he moved to White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, as assistant pro, in the autumn of 1935. There he carded a few minor accomplishments to forecast the fame he was later to achieve, and the most impressive of these was an

astounding sixty-one with which he charred the "Old White" course at White Sulphur Springs during the annual West Virginia professional championship; in the spring of 1936 he teamed with Johnny Goodman, the well-known ace, to defeat Lawson Little and Billy Burke, three and two, in a four-ball match. These were the early signs, but it was not until a year later, when he joined the travelling caravan of the touring professionals, that the name of Snead rose to the heights of golf-dom and spread over the nation and to every part of the world where a niblick is an important tool.

What a rise and what a spread it was!

In the space of a few months and as few victories he became the number one drawing card among the wandering pros. He was built up in the press of the nation as someone resembling a member of the hillbilly bands which were then the current craze on the air waves. But he was a hillbilly who could play golf, and when he hit them off the tee, they travelled a mile or more. There were many stories written at the time of Snead, telling how he developed his accurate putting eye by hunting squirrels in the hills, and others of a similar breed trying to add to his color and appeal, which was tantamount to gilding the lily. Many of these tall tales of the sports pages were sheer fiction, but

there was one that made the rounds and was sworn to be the truth, the whole truth, and it actually happened.

When Sammy first began to hit the national publicity jackpot, transmission of photos from one city to another by wire was long perfected, and when he won several tournaments it was only natural that his picture should be put on the wires to New York. One day Fred Corcoran, the tournament manager, received a copy of a New York paper in the mail, and on the sports page was a grinning photo of Snead. He went looking for Sam and found him whittling under a tree.

"Say, Sam," said Fred, "you're really getting famous. Here's a picture of you in the New York papers."

"Well, dawgone, Mr. Corcoran," drawled Sammy in reply. "They cain't have my picture. I've never even been to New York."

It was not long before Sammy's photogenic swing and smile were flying over the wires to all parts of the golf world. In his first year with the big timers, he took the measure of the best of them on several occasions. Individual golf tournaments are best told in the figures of the scoreboard. The story of a year is best outlined in the figures of the pocketbook. In his first year matching shots with

the nation's best, Snead won \$10,243.73 and was third highest money winner for the year. It was a pretty good showing, and an excellent take for a novice, all agreed.

Among Snead's accomplishments that season was his proof that he was easily the longest hitter in the game. A long driving contest was held at the Pittsburgh Field Club, and the best of the long hitters were entered. They drove them far, wide and handsome—but when the day and the contest was done, they were still looking ahead to Snead. This plus many minor tournaments which Sammy won paled before his accomplishment in the National Open championship of 1937. Still a novice in the major league of golf, Sammy Snead drove his way through the number one tournament of the golf world to finish second to Ralph Guldahl, the veteran linksman, who won the first of his two national championships in a row. Snead's 72-hole medal score was a brilliant 283.

It was a cinch that the rookie would be chosen on the 1937 Ryder Cup team, and he was. It was a cinch that he would be even better the following year now that he had gotten the feel of the fairways, and he was. Nothing like the Snead of 1938 had ever before been seen in golf. The now thoroughly citified West Virginian hammered his

way with his cannonading tee shots and long fairway woods and irons, plus the thread-needle accuracy of his putter, to the greatest winning streak known to that date in professional golf. Money talks, and it sang that season to the tune of \$19,534.40 in tournament winnings for Sammy Snead. That sum was more than twice the amount won by Johnny Revolta, who was second in the financial line. More than that, in his second year of prominence Snead was awarded the Vardon Memorial Trophy as the best golfer of 1938. He won the title in a walkaway, gaining a total of 520 points toward the trophy, 141 more than Paul Runyan, the winner of the P.G.A. championship, who was runner-up for the Vardon honor. It was in 1938 that Snead also won the first of his three Canadian Open championships, but Guldahl again thwarted him in the United States Open, and Runyan won the P.G.A.

The golf world began to wonder if Snead could win all the tournaments except the two biggest ones available to the pros in America.

The golfers, themselves, began to wonder just how far this Snead would go in his domination of the game. Sammy was not particularly popular with his fellow players at that time, for he was the quiet, sultry type who kept pretty much to him-

self and did not mix with the others on the course, in the locker room, or after the day's play was done. About the only friend he had among the golfers at the time was Johnny Bulla, who was strictly an unknown compared to Snead. It was with Bulla that Sammy, with about \$250 to his name, had started out on the tournament trek those two years before. The two of them had a second-hand, semi-junk heap of an automobile and they made the long drive from Miami to Los Angeles at the close of one and the start of the next winter tour. Snead quickly slid along the rainbow into the pot of gold, but he and Bulla remained fast friends. They were still hitting the trail together in early 1939, when Snead was recognized by everyone as the King of Golfdom.

The other golfers' dislike for Snead, though, was really biting the hand that was helping to fill their mouths with the sweetest nourishment they ever had known. Snead became the biggest drawing card in the game since the glory days of Bobby Jones. His very entry in a tournament was the signal for its success. If he did not enter, many a promoter threatened to abandon the tourney. When Sammy was hot and winning, the galleries would spread over the fairways; if he was cool and not winning, they would shrink in size. But still

the majority of the crowd would follow Snead just to watch him hit them.

The full effect of Sammy's rise to the heights of the game was again shown on the jumping numbers of the cash registers. In 1936, B.S. (Before Snead), the total prize money for which the professionals played that season was \$134,000. In 1937, when the name of Snead first began to blaze on the sports pages, this figure grew to \$174,000; in 1938 it jumped again to \$185,000. With Snead still a terrific drawing card and the help he received from such stars as Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan as they moved into prominence, those figures have grown by many, many more thousands to the present day.

But the natural resentment for a newcomer suddenly hogging the limelight, plus Snead's natural evasiveness, made him as unpopular with the pros as he was popular with the people. Sammy did not mind this at all, however. He was content to play his golf by day and return to his hotel afterwards to listen to the radio. Radio was Sam's other love. He would, it is said, turn on three radios and three programs at a time, to make sure he would not miss anything good on the airwaves. One of Snead's original idols was Bob Burns, the comedian of the ether and the screen, and a fa-

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mous hillbilly in his own right. Snead has also developed a strong friendship with Bing Crosby through the years of playing golf on the West Coast.

As 1938 drew to a close, with Snead on top of the roost, the forecasts for 1939 were for even greater glory and financial remuneration for Sammy Snead. But the New Year had barely gotten underway, and was only two Pacific Coast tournaments along, when Snead announced that he was leaving the winter circuit and going home for a rest. The strain of 1938's triumphal march had caught up with him. He caught a cold and could not shake it. His mother was sick at home. He was worried about her. His game was suffering. He wanted to go home, and he did.

Snead shoved off for White Sulphur Springs, just before the annual Bing Crosby tournament, which he had won the previous two years in a row. He remained out of the picture for a month, but early in February a story found its way out of White Sulphur to the effect that Snead was again playing golf, that he was getting restless and eager to get back on the trail. Finally in late February he rejoined the caravan in New Orleans, and promoters rubbed their hands with satisfaction.

But Snead could not get back to his sensational



game of the preceding year. At the close of the winter circuit he was the disappointment of 1939. He was still in that category when the day in June dawned for the 1939 National Open tournament at the Philadelphia Country Club. And what a dawn that was for Sammy Snead!

Since those June days at the Spring Mill course, Sammy has continued to win tournaments, adding continually to his personal laurels. He has been champion of enough tournaments to hang out a shingle of honors. But from that June in Philadelphia—even to the present day—Snead has been best known and perhaps most often recalled as the guy who took an eight on the final hole of the National Open.

It is frequently true that an individual or an institution in athletics is remembered for an outstanding defeat, rather than for any outstanding feat or series of triumphs which might brighten its history. For example, a football team, which won many championships, played in several Bowl games, but during one season when it was unbeaten and hailed as the greatest team in the nation, it was soundly whipped by an underdog rival in the final game of the season. Students of that college have since complained that in their wartime travels, they were always associated with the

team so badly beaten, rather than with those which won so many honors. There always comes to mind in such instances, of course, the story of Sammy Snead and the United States Open of 1939.

This is it:—

The public did not consider Sammy a serious threat to win the Open that year, because his game had fallen off during his enforced vacation from the links. Ralph Guldahl, winner of the Open the two previous years, was playing good golf at the time and he was made the favorite. The "books" quoted Snead as a 10-1 shot for the title. There is no other tournament to match the National Open. There are other tourneys which pack color and good golf in large quantities, but the Open is the World Series of the links. Crowds stormed Philadelphia the first day of the 1939 championship. The course was crowded—a riot of color—and, as usual, the largest galleries followed Sammy Snead, even though he was not given much chance to win.

The Snead gallery was rewarded well for its loyalty that first day of play. Snead showed up in all his mighty form. His long drives zipped down the length of the fairways, his chipping was deadly, his putting sure. At the end of the first eighteen holes, he was the low man. He had shot a 68, and he was one stroke to the good on Bud Ward, the

amateur, Lawson Little and Matt Kowal, who were triple-tied in second place.

The word spread throughout the golfing kingdom: Snead's back in form. It spread and it grew during the second round when he fired a 71 to remain in the lead with one stroke to the good on Horton Smith, who moved into second position. Sammy's game began to fade a little on the first nine holes of this round, but he took hold of himself with another Snead characteristic—courage—and held onto his lead. He held his advantage through a third-round 73, and then stepped onto the first tee for the final eighteen holes of the championship.

Those eighteen holes—or at least the eighteenth hole—will never be forgotten by any follower of the game. Certainly they will never be forgotten by Sammy Snead. On occasion, they must rise in the night to mangle his dreams.

All was well to the seventeenth, and Snead was coasting along on the lead he had built himself. His game faltered a bit on seventeen and he hacked out a five, but still his lead was true and there was just the one remaining hole for him to play. Just that one remaining hole! In previous rounds Sammy had found the uphill part of the Spring Mill course to his liking, and as he stepped

up onto the tee for a final time, it seemed certain that he was at last to win his first major championship. Then it happened.

His drive was all right, but his second shot went into a trap just short of the green. Still he could get on in three and have two putts for a five. He made ready to blast out of the trap. He swung. And he missed the ball completely! The gallery groaned. Snead stared. He made ready again. He lifted his club, swung. The ball flew into the air, rode on the wings of bad luck, and dropped into another trap just around the green. The gallery sensed now that the championship was being buried in the sand, but still they rooted silently for Snead. Sammy finally blasted out onto the green, forty feet from the pin, and prepared for his first putt. It missed, rolled three feet past the cup, and then Snead missed the second putt coming back!

It was over then, the battle that seemed headed for success. Sammy put his third putt in with a touch of the ultimate in disgust, but his eight brought him in with a 74, swelled his 72-hole total to 286 and knocked him right out of the running. Byron Nelson, Craig Wood and Denny Shute finished in a triple tie for the title. Next day Nelson and Wood were still tied at the end of

a play-off. Finally in a second play-off, Nelson won easily.

But from that day on Snead was "the golfer who took an eight on the 72nd hole and blew the National Open championship."

It was not until 1942 that Snead could win his first major American title. "Often a bridesmaid," he had been three times runner-up for the P.G.A. title, the bitter match play battle for the professional championship of the nation—a tournament more gruelling if not as colorful and productive of honors as the Open. The 1942 P.G.A. was scheduled for the Seaview course in Atlantic City, and though the war had then been on for America for five months, it was decided to go ahead with the tourney. Snead had enlisted in the navy and was scheduled for induction just prior to the start of the championship.

But the navy had a heart. It gave Snead a stay until after the tourney, and Sammy rewarded them by winning the title. He had no easy task of it either. After qualifying with a thirty-six hole total of 73-71-144, six strokes back of Harry Cooper's medal-winning tally, Snead ran smack into Sammy Byrd, the former New York Yankee outfielder turned golfer, in the first round of match play.

Snead won the battle of the Sammies, by a 7 and 6 count, and then he turned his siege gun clubs on Willie Goggin and massacred that worthy by a nine and eight margin. Ed Dudley, the P.G.A. president, was next and put up quite a battle, but Snead survived one-up. And in the semi-final Sammy turned on his friend, Jimmy Demaret, and entered the championship play with a three and two victory.

In the other half of the draw Jim Turnesa had marched through to the final, and since he was a corporal on leave from the army, the papers built up the final as a battle between the army and the navy. Snead did not want to let the navy down after it had given him the chance to compete, and he went lock, stock and barrel—driver, irons and putter—after Turnesa. At the twenty-third hole, however, things looked black for the navy blue, for the corporal was leading three-up.

But that is when Snead is at his best.

Sammy dug his spiked shoes into the fairways. His clubs began to boom out their cannon-like shots. And at the twenty-seventh hole the match was all even. Still Sammy was not content. He kept hammering his opponent with the power of his shots and at the thirtieth hole he was two-up. On the thirty-fifth his tee shot landed sixty feet

short of the pin and with perfect poise and accuracy Snead chipped in from there for a birdie two and the title. The match ended in a three and one victory for the navy.

Snead was proud to take the P.G.A. title with him into the service. He had won the Canadian Open championship in 1938, 1940 and 1941 plus countless other honors in the host of tournaments, which have sprung up with the frequency of milestones on the year-'round tour of the professionals, but the P.G.A., and, most of all the Open titles were the ones Sam, or any golfer, wanted to win.

When Sam was discharged from the navy, he took up the tour and the quest of money and glory once again, but when the National Open was revived in June of 1946, he could not match the shots of Lloyd Mangrum, the title winner, and was just among the also-rans.

In the British Isles, however, the British Open championship raised itself out of the ruins of war and was scheduled during the month of July. Fred Corcoran, the P.G.A. director, decided that Snead was the logical American ambassador to go over and bring back the British crown, but Sammy put up an argument. His putting had been poor in the United States Open and he was dissatisfied with that part of his game. Corcoran argued, and

was joined by allies in the cause. Finally Snead surrendered.

"I guess it will be a nice trip anyhow," he said.

Before he left for England, Snead did something about his putting. He looked up Walter Hagen, the old master, and "the Haig" gave him a lesson. He told Sammy to hit the ball on the upswing of his putter, rather than on the downswing. It was as simple as that.

It was almost as simple for Sammy Snead to win the British Open title, too, becoming the first American to bring home the honors since Denny Shute's victory in 1933. Sammy romped through his first round in two-under par 71, and went three under for a seventy in the second eighteen holes. A third-round of seventy-four kept him in the lead, and despite the fact that the day of the final round was blustery with high winds more fit for flying kites than playing golf, Sammy held on. His hard, long drives and iron shots flew into the teeth of the gale and did battle with the force of the winds. Sammy finished with a final seventy-five, a seventy-two-hole total of 290, two under par for the famed St. Andrew's course. Four strokes in back of Snead, in a tie for second place with Bobby Locke of South Africa, was his pal



from the flat broke and flivver days of 1937, Johnny Bulla.

Snead had come a long way since those days, but he refused to permit fame and success to change him. As British Open champion, he received his laurels with a grin, holding onto a broad-brimmed hat against the wind, and when he was called on to say a few words, he held onto the hat the harder: "I don't want to lose this," he smiled. "It's the only thing I have in common with Bing Crosby."

In speaking about his golf triumph, Sammy merely said, "Shucks, I really just came along for the ride."

That, perhaps, is the summation of the reason Sammy Snead is so popular with the ordinary guys of golfdom. He can win with the ease of a great champion, yet jest with the ease of an ordinary duffer. The galleries like the way he swings and the way he smiles, the way he putts and the way he talks. They know that he can win a tournament at any time, that it does not matter how far behind he is with the courage and skill he possesses on the golf course. They also remember that he once blew a championship by taking an eight, as they might, on a hole, and despite the fact that he

has since come back to win that P.G.A. title and the British Open championship, they know that he will not completely erase the memories of that eight until he wipes it off the books by winning a United States Open championship. And just about any one of them would be willing to bet that some year very soon, when it is least expected, Sammy Snead will walk up and walk off with the Open title, because he is that good a golfer, and that type of a fellow.

### **SAMMY SNEAD**

#### **MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP TRIUMPHS AND COMPETITION**

1937

Runner-up in United States Open.

Member of Ryder Cup team, which defeated British team, 8 to 4. In a singles match, Snead defeated Richard Burton of England, 5 and 4.

1938

Won Canadian Open championship.

1940

Won Canadian Open championship.

1941

Won Canadian Open championship.

1942

Won Professional Golfers' Association championship.  
June 1942 to September 1944, in U. S. Navy.

1945

Won Los Angeles Open.  
Won Gulfport Open.  
Won Pensacola Open.

Won Jacksonville Open.

Won Dallas Open.

1946

Won British Open championship.

Won Jacksonville Open.

Won Greensboro Open.

Won Chicago Winner Take All Tournament (value to winner \$10,000).



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON  
ATHLETES PRESENTED IN  
PREVIOUS BOOKS



## CHAPTER XVII

ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF ATHLETES PRESENTED  
IN PREVIOUS VOLUMES

### THE COOPER BROTHERS

(Ninth Series—By Gordon Campbell)

MORT COOPER of the Boston Braves and Walker Cooper of the New York Giants both had comparatively poor years in 1946. Walker had a badly injured finger during most of the season, while Mort pitched well one day and poorly the next for the rejuvenated Boston National League team, which finished fourth in the pennant race, and barely missed ending up in third place.

It was Mort, however, who won fame for the family, and he had to wait until the very last day of the 1946 season to do that. On that Sunday afternoon, September 29, he pitched a four-hit shutout in Brooklyn to defeat the Dodgers and throw the National League pennant race into the first deadlock in major league history.

Cooper reached his 1946 peak that day. The Dodgers of Brooklyn would have won the pennant had they beaten him, for the St. Louis Cardinals also lost. The result was the unprecedented play-off which the Cardinals, who later went on to beat the Red Sox in the World Series, won in two straight games.

A curious sidelight to Cooper's victory was an exchange of telegrams between him and President Harry Truman. The President, an ardent St. Louis fan, since he lives in Independence, Missouri, sent a wire to Cooper, who once pitched for the Cardinals, wishing him luck in his game with Brooklyn, for, if the Braves beat the Dodgers and the Cardinals beat the Chicago Cubs, the St. Louis club would have clinched the pennant during the regular season.

Cooper's reply to the President was to the effect that the Chief Executive would have nothing to worry about. Mort did his part in stopping the Dodgers, but, when the Cardinals lost, too, it forced the National League pennant race into the first play-off in baseball history.



## JOE CRONIN

(Ninth Series—By Gordon Campbell)

The manager of the Red Sox attained a goal which he had been struggling for over a period of a decade when he finally led his team to an American League pennant in 1946. Cronin was made manager of the Red Sox in 1935, and, from then on, his career had consisted of one disappointment after another.

Time after time, the Red Sox were always a bridesmaid but never a bride. Year after year, they failed to capitalize on what appeared to be golden opportunities to win a flag that constantly eluded them. Tom Yawkey, their wealthy owner, had poured millions of dollars into the team, but not until 1946 was Cronin able to present him with the pennant of which he had dreamed for years.

Cronin arrived as a great manager in 1946. He had long been criticized for the handling of his pitchers. In 1946, he handled them perfectly, although there were critics of his methods in the World Series, which the Red Sox lost to the St. Louis Cardinals. He had long been criticized for his handling of men, but in 1946, he won the re-

spect and love of the members of the team which he led to the top of the American League.

His Red Sox went into the lead in late April and never relinquished it. On one occasion, they were as much as sixteen games ahead of their nearest rivals. In late April and early May, the team won fifteen straight games, and then Joe Cronin and his men coasted to the championship.

When, in September, they clinched the pennant in Cleveland, Yawkey calmly and graciously passed all of the credit along to Cronin.

"I may have spent the money," he said, "but there's the man who won the pennant and there's the man who deserves all the credit."

And with that, he pointed to Cronin, and refused to say any more on the subject.

Although the losing of the World Series to the Cardinals was a terrific disappointment, since the Red Sox were heavily favored to win, it was not Cronin's fault that his team failed in the 1946 baseball classic. The club went into an unaccountable slump in September and it never really pulled out of it.

Furthermore, the Red Sox of 1946 were made up, for the most part, of men who had never played in a World Series before, while the bulk of the St. Louis club were World Series veterans.

The series went to seven games, and was only won in the eighth inning of the seventh contest when Enos Slaughter of the Cardinals took a mad gamble and won when he scored from first base on a line single by Harry Walker.

Cronin, with the resignation of Joe McCarthy as manager of the New York Yankees in mid-season, became the second oldest manager in point of service with the same team in the major leagues, topped only by the venerable Connie Mack, who has managed the Athletics of Philadelphia since their inception. The year 1946 was Cronin's twelfth as manager of the Red Sox. Since he has a long-term contract, and since Yawkey is satisfied with him, there is every indication that he will manage the club for many years to come.

## JOE DiMAGGIO

(Fifth Series—By LeRoy Atkinson and others)

Beset by injuries, harassed by personal problems and the butt of continual and cruel derision from New York baseball fans, the peerless Joe DiMaggio had the poorest season of his baseball career in 1946. The Yankees, mighty before the war, and together as a group when it was over for the first time during the 1946 season, fell apart, and, al-

though it was not all DiMaggio's fault, the great outfielder spent most of the season in the worst slump of his baseball life.

DiMaggio never regained his pre-war form. Once a popular hero at Yankee Stadium, he suddenly became, for no apparent reason, the most unpopular ball player on the club. Whenever he trotted out to the field, or went to bat, DiMaggio was greeted with a chorus of boos. Undoubtedly, it affected his hitting, especially since the treatment he received from the fans in New York was unfair and uncalled for, and he knew it.

He was in the hospital two or three times with sprained ligaments, muscle injuries and the like. On top of that, he had personal troubles which, unfortunately, were constantly hinted at in public, although they were not public property. He worried continually, and that did not help. His only satisfaction in the season was the fact that his younger brother, Dominic, of the Boston Red Sox, to whom he is very close, had a sensational year, and helped materially in the winning of the pennant by the Boston club.

DiMaggio, who was thirty-two in November of 1946, still has several good years to look forward to. He is expected to return to form in 1947, and, if he does, the Yankees, who finished third in the

1946 race, should be dangerous contenders again. If he does not get hurt, his friends and admirers see great things in the future for him, despite the fact that he was just another ball player during his most disastrous season.

## HIS 1946 RECORD

| Team     | League   | G   | AB  | R  | H   | HR | RBI | P.C. |
|----------|----------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|------|
| New York | American | 132 | 503 | 79 | 146 | 25 | 94  | .290 |

## BOB FELLER

(Seventh Series—By Jerry Nason and others)

Bob Feller, the Iowa farm boy who became one of the great pitchers of all time, made more money in 1946 than any other big league baseball player. He had a bonus arrangement with President William Veeck of the Cleveland Indians, and it returned him a fantastic profit. Always a great drawing power, the Indians advertised in advance when he was to pitch and, as the darling of the Cleveland fans, the stands were almost always packed whenever he took the mound.

Feller's claim to 1946 fame was based on the fact that, on the last day of the season, he broke all known formal records for strikeouts in a single season when he fanned seven men to give him a total of 348 for the year. Actually, there was some

question as to whether or not Rube Waddell of the Philadelphia Athletics had once struck out 349 in one year, but that record was so doubtful that Feller's 348 mark was immediately accepted as a record.

A tireless worker, Feller pitched every time Lou Boudreau, his manager, asked him to do so, and, more than once, he volunteered to take the mound. As the season neared its end, and Feller saw that he had a chance to establish a new record for strikeouts, he hurled a few innings nearly every day and he pitched the entire final game of the season against Detroit.

The moment the season ended, Feller led a team of picked all-stars on a whirlwind barnstorming tour, which took him and his team from coast to coast, and he himself later went to Hawaii to pitch a few exhibitions. The tour was so profitable that the men who played for Feller were reported to have made more money individually than the members of the Boston Red Sox and the St. Louis Cardinals, who played in the 1946 World Series. Feller himself almost duplicated his regular season baseball earnings as his share in conducting the trip.

Only a powerful man with a terrific right arm

could have stood the grind to which Feller subjected himself. His arm seemed like rubber and, despite the fact that he pitched a half again as much as anyone else in baseball, he seemed to thrive on the work. In the late stages of the season, he spent as much time on the telephone arranging for his country-wide tour, lining up ball players and taking care of all the small details in connection with traveling, accommodations and all the other angles, that it was a miracle that he could pitch effectively at all. But plans for his post-season activity did not interfere with his pitching and he was one of the great stars of the 1946 season, just as he had been before spending four years in the United States Navy.

## FELLER'S 1946 RECORD

| G  | W  | L  | P.C. | BB  | SO  |
|----|----|----|------|-----|-----|
| 48 | 26 | 15 | .634 | 153 | 348 |

## HANK GOWDY

(First Series—By Charles H. L. Johnston)

Major Hank Gowdy was honorably discharged from the United States Army in October, 1944, after serving two years as recreation officer at Fort Benning, Georgia. The first major-league baseball

player to enlist in World War I in 1917, he emerged a sergeant after serving in the front-line trenches. He entered the Second World War with the rank of captain. He rejoined the Cincinnati Reds as coach for the 1945 baseball season, replacing Hans Lobert. In 1946 he left Cincinnati and returned to the New York Giants, the outfit with whom he had first played big league baseball, as coach of pitchers.

## HENRY (HANK) GREENBERG

(Seventh Series—By Jerry Nason)

Hank Greenberg was thirty-five years old on January 1, 1946, and he felt older. He had spent four of what would have been the best baseball years of his life in the army. On his return to the Detroit Tigers, he was tired and his age, which was old for a ball player, was telling on him.

As the season progressed, he felt worse. He was playing first base, where the going was tough for a man who had been out of the game for four years and had reached an age when most men retire from baseball. He was financially secure and, although he was drawing down, according to report, the highest salary in the game, he was ready to quit. He toyed with the idea of giving up the



game entirely and moving to the west coast, which he had learned to love, and where he wanted to settle permanently.

Like Joe DiMaggio in New York, he was victimized by the fans of Detroit, who greeted him with vociferous boos every time he stepped to the plate. The Tigers were the defending champions, since they had won the pennant and the World Series in 1945. Greenberg, who was one of the first major league ball players to go into the service, was one of the first to return to civilian life, and he had joined the Tigers in time to help them in their drive for the 1945 pennant and their victory over the Chicago Cubs in the series that followed.

On at least one occasion, he was reported to have dickered for the purchase of a team in the Class AAA Pacific Coast League. He is still reported to be interested, but, now, that may have to wait.

The 1946 season moved on apace. The Tigers, far behind the Red Sox of Boston, were desperately trying to catch the New York Yankees, who were in second place in the American League pennant race. Greenberg, who once had hit fifty-eight home runs, to come within two of Babe Ruth's all-time record of sixty, made in 1927, hit

an occasional homer, but his bat did not seem to have the power which it had before he went into the army.

As month after month went by, and Greenberg disappointed himself and his fans, he began to tell friends privately that 1946 would definitely be his last year in baseball. He could not hit with his old-time potency, his joints creaked, his back hurt, his legs bothered him and, in a word, he was too old for a young man's game—so he said.

And then, suddenly, Hank Greenberg's big bludgeon caught fire. In September, he finally got the range of the fences. Day in and day out, he exploded home runs. He won one ball game after another for the Tigers who, more or less apathetic up to then, woke up and began a stretch drive which carried them up to and beyond the Yankees. The Tigers finished second in 1946, and the only reason they did was because the sleeping giant that was Greenberg finally woke up.

Greenberg's September record was nothing short of amazing. He hit sixteen home runs during that month alone, coming within three of the record, held by Rudy York, now of the White Sox, but then a team-mate of Greenberg's in Detroit. York once went on a home run hitting spree,

smashing nineteen out of various American League ball parks in a single month.

Greenberg came as close to that record as any ball player ever has. The big Detroit slugger had a chance to tie or break it, for he had sixteen home runs with three games left to play. A home run a game at the end of the season would have tied York's record, but his bat did not have any more circuit drives left in it.

The great September streak carried Greenberg to the home run hitting championship of the league, for he ended up with a total of forty-four. It also carried him to the run batted in title, for he amassed 127 for the season. In both cases, he passed Ted Williams of the Red Sox during the last week of the campaign, as Williams had led in both departments for most of the season.

As for Greenberg's decision to retire—he forgot all about that in September of 1946. But now he will play no more first base for Detroit. In 1947, he was sold to the Pittsburgh Pirates.

## GREENBERG'S 1946 RECORD

| Club    | League   | G   | AB  | R  | H   | HR | RBI | P.C. |
|---------|----------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|------|
| Detroit | American | 142 | 523 | 89 | 144 | 44 | 127 | .275 |

## JOE LOUIS

(Sixth Series—By Harold Kaese and others)

The world's heavyweight boxing champion, like the famous river, just rolled on and on in 1946, and, by the end of the year, there were no logical contenders on the horizon for the title which he has held since he knocked out Jimmy Braddock in Chicago in 1937.

After Louis was released from the army, the publicity for the defense of his title against Billy Conn began. Ever since Conn had outpointed Louis for twelve rounds and then suddenly was knocked out by the "Brown Bomber" in the 13th, boxing fans the world over had been looking forward to a return match. Like Louis, Conn went into the army, and the two were unable to box professionally until they went back into civilian clothes.

The first Conn-Louis fight took place in 1941. The second, backed by the most tremendous publicity campaign in boxing history, piled up over a period of five years, was planned for June 19, 1946, in the massive Yankee Stadium in New York.

Conn began training in March, three months before the fight, at Greenwood Lakes, New Jersey, sixty miles from New York City. A month later,

Louis set up training quarters at Pompton Lakes, New Jersey. From then on, all of the mighty publicity weapons possessed by Mike Jacobs and his Twentieth Century Boxing Club, which staged the fight, were brought into play, with the result that, by the time the fight took place, some seven hundred newspapermen, radio personnel and photographers from all over the world had come to New York to cover the spectacle. This included three men from Australia, half a dozen from England, one from South Africa, two from South America, several from the European continent and representatives of metropolitan dailies in every state in the Union.

Jacobs decided to charge fantastic prices, ranging from one hundred dollars down to ten dollars, and he expected to draw a record gate financially. It was the first time in American boxing history that a \$100 top had ever been charged for a formal prize fight. In spite of the prices, the gate fell short of \$2,000,000, and thus failed to break the record of over two million set by the second heavyweight championship fight between Gene Tunney and Jack Dempsey in 1927.

As a fight, the spectacle was a serious disappointment. Conn was no match for the champion, and, after toying with his rival for seven rounds, Louis

knocked the Pittsburgh man out with no trouble in the eighth round. It was the first defense of his title since he had knocked out Abe Simon in 1942, after he went into the army.

Almost three months to the day later, on September 18, 1946, Louis risked his crown again, this time going into the ring with Tami Mauriello of the Bronx in New York. Mauriello started with the opening bell, and hit Louis almost flush in the point of the jaw, staggering the champion and sending him against the ropes.

Louis, from then on, wasted no time. He made no attempt to make the fight last, and concentrated on getting the Bronx boy out of there as rapidly as possible. Before the first round was over, he sent Mauriello to the canvas for the count of ten and, for the second time since the war, successfully defended his championship.

While Louis has slowed up considerably since the days when he was at his peak, 1946 results proved that he was still far and away the best boxer in the world. Prospects of his being deprived of his title in 1947 are slim, although there is no doubt but that he will defend it against someone at least once.

## TED LYONS

(Eighth Series—By Harold Kaese and others)

In June of 1946, old, reliable Ted Lyons, who had been pitching magnificent ball for the Chicago White Sox for twenty years, was called into the office of Leslie O'Connor, the White Sox general manager and offered the job of managing a team which had been run by Jimmy Dykes for a dozen years. Dykes, disgusted because he could not pull the team out of the general neighborhood of the American League cellar, had resigned that day.

Lyons, who, in spite of the fact that he was forty-five had just returned as an active player after spending four years as a U. S. Marine officer, was flabbergasted at the opportunity, and happy to accept it. He promptly retired as a pitcher and began the long, tough job of attempting to rebuild a team which never was the same after over a quarter of a century of struggling following the infamous "Black Sox" scandal of 1919.

The first job confronting Lyons was to try to convince his ball players that they were not as bad as they looked. Lyons, always one of the most popular men in the game, had the respect, even

the love, of his own men, and they were anxious to play ball for him.

It took a long time for results to show. The new White Sox manager quietly went to work, and, while baseball eyes were focussed on the top brackets of the two major leagues, the Chicago club gradually began to climb.

Not until the final week of the 1946 campaign did fans realize what Lyons had done. On the last day of the season, his team was half a game out of fourth place, but the St. Louis Browns beat the White Sox that day, and they finished fifth, at the head of the first division, barely out of the money brackets.

Lyons is expected to make the White Sox a factor within a few years. He is a big league manager, a post he richly deserves, and, in his quiet way, he may become as successful at the job as he was during the two decades that he was pitching.

### AMOS ALONZO STAGG

(Ninth Series—By Gordon Campbell)

The Grand Old Man of college football celebrated his eighty-fourth birthday during the summer of 1946, but he was still coaching youngsters three generations behind him. But, when the season ended at the College of the Pacific, where he



had held forth for fourteen years, he resigned his post, and announced that he would go back east to act in an advisory capacity for his son, Amos Alonzo Stagg, Jr., head coach of football at Susquehanna College in Pennsylvania.

Stagg, like Manager Connie Mack of the Philadelphia Athletics, is one of the miracles of the century. At an age when most men can look back on nearly two decades of retirement, he still refuses to sit back and watch the football world go by. At seventy, he was retired as head coach of football at the University of Chicago and offered a life job as an advisor, but he angrily turned it down and went west.

He lasted as Pacific's coach for nearly a decade and a half. His teams there were not top-flight, but, in their own class, they won their share of games. However, authorities at the small west coast college hinted broadly in 1946 that they preferred a younger man for the job, so Stagg resigned at the close of the football campaign.

How much longer he intends to remain in harness, no one, not even he, can say. But, at Susquehanna, he will be with his son, an experienced gridiron coach himself, and, undoubtedly, the old gentleman's advice and counsel will be of great value to the younger man.

## "DIXIE" WALKER

(Ninth Series—By Gordon Campbell)

At an age when most ball players are ready to quit, Dixie Walker of the Brooklyn Dodgers had one of his greatest years in 1946. His contemporaries, for the most part, had long since gone to pasture, but Dixie, at thirty-eight was one of the reasons why an inferior Dodger team, magnificently managed by Leo Durocher, forced the St. Louis Cardinals into the historic play-off before the Redbirds could clinch the National League pennant.

Walker is an institution in Brooklyn. He is and has been for years Brooklyn's hero. Brooklyn fans are, of course, the most rabid and partisan in the world, and followers of the Dodgers take their heroes seriously. Walker cannot walk down Flatbush Avenue or venture along Eastern Parkway without being mobbed by admirers.

He had, as usual, a great year at the plate, batting .323 and driving in 116 runs. Day in and day out, he would come to bat in a tight spot and send home anywhere from one to three runs to pull ball games out of the fire at the last minute for Durocher and his Dodgers.

His fielding was magnificent all year. His

deadly arm kept opponents from running wild on the bases and his all-round play steadied a shaky ball club which was always in need of a wheel about which to revolve.

Year after year, Brooklyn officials have announced that Walker's right field position was open and year after year Walker has gone out and won his job back. The same thing happened to him in 1946. He did not even start the season at right field, for Durocher intended to rebuild his team around younger men, and that did not include Walker.

But, before the season was a week old, Dixie was Brooklyn's regular right fielder again, and he was there for the rest of the year. Witness the fact that he played in 148 out of 156 games the Dodgers had in 1946.

By all normal standards, Walker should be through, but no one in Brooklyn could be made to believe that and neither could Dixie, for his eyes and his legs and his body have all stood up under the long grind, even though his hair is as thin as that of Durocher, his previous manager.

Since Walker is not an ordinary ball player, he will probably be the Dodgers' right fielder for a few more years, at least. And, as such, he will break up plenty of ball games to the delight of his thou-

sands of fans, who could not imagine the Dodgers ever being the same without him.

## WALKER'S 1946 RECORD

| Club     | League   | G   | AB  | R  | H   | HR | RBI | P.C. |
|----------|----------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|------|
| Brooklyn | National | 148 | 570 | 80 | 184 | 9  | 116 | .323 |

## TED WILLIAMS

(Eighth Series—By Harold Kaese and others)

Baseball's most controversial figure in 1946 was Ted Williams. The Boston Red Sox slugger returned to action after service as a U. S. marine flyer, and he promptly proceeded to pace his team to the American League pennant. Williams the ball player was the year's Most Valuable Player, by vote of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Williams the man was the butt of customer boos on occasion, and, all too often, he allowed the crowd reaction to affect his temperament.

He did not have the greatest year of his baseball career, but he did have a year to be remembered. Until two weeks before the end of the season, he led the league in home runs and runs batted in and was close enough to the batting leadership so that he had a chance to win that.

The principal source of Williams' trouble was a

strange defense against his batting originally devised by Manager Lou Boudreau of the Cleveland Indians. One day at Fenway Park in Boston, Boudreau ordered virtually his entire team to shift well over to the right. His first baseman played on the first base foul line. His second baseman played between first and second, almost outside of the infield grass. Boudreau himself, his team's shortstop, shifted to the right side of second base. He placed his third baseman closer to second base than to third. He put his right fielder almost on the foul line and moved his center fielder almost into right field.

The result was that the only man covering the left side of the diamond was Pat Seerey, his left fielder. Seerey moved in so close to the infield that he was playing virtually a deep shortstop position.

The reason for all this, of course, was the fact that Williams, a left-handed batter, was what is known as a dead right field hitter. When the Red Sox star was faced with this defense, he was first puzzled, then angry and finally defiant. Instead of swinging slightly shorter so that he could hit to left, he accepted the defense as a challenge and tried to drill hits through it.

For the most part, the result was disastrous for

Williams. Boudreau had the right side of the diamond so well covered that getting a ball through it was like trying to find an opening in a solid wall. Hard-hit balls that would normally be good for hits went right into the hands of a Cleveland infielder. The only way Williams could consistently beat the defense, if he did not hit to left, would be by smashing the ball into the stands for a home run. He pressed too hard in attempting to do this, and the result was that he went into a slump in late August, out of which he never really came for the balance of the season.

Once or twice, he bunted down the third base line and then trotted safely to first, since there were no Indians covering that corner. But, for the most part, the challenge was too blatant for Williams to resist, and, time after time, he tried to find a spot on the right side through which he could hit the ball.

The defense backfired on Boudreau only once, and that once was important. On Friday, September 13, 1946, the Red Sox had to win one more game to clinch the pennant. The Red Sox were playing at League Park in Cleveland, and Bob Embree was pitching for the Indians. The so-called "C-Formation"—Boudreau's by then famous shift—was in use when Williams came up in

the first inning. The tall Sox slugger hit a routine fly ball to left, over Seerey's head and the ball went all the way to the left field fence. By the time the Indian outfielders had retrieved it, Williams had a home run inside the park.

The hit won the game and the pennant for the Red Sox, for the Detroit Tigers lost that day, and the flag was clinched. Embree pitched nearly perfectly for the rest of the game, allowing only one more hit, but Tex Hughson, pitching for the Red Sox, was at his best and only gave three hits himself, so the Sox won, 1-0. The home run was the last that Williams made all season.

Manager Eddie Dyer of the St. Louis Cardinals, tearing a leaf from the page of Boudreau's book, set a defense similar to the "C-Formation" against Williams when the Red Sox faced the Cardinals in the World Series. The difference between Dyer's shift and Boudreau's was that Dyer moved Whitey Kurowski, his third baseman, over to the right side of second base and left Marty Marion, his great shortstop, to roam the territory between second and third. Dyer moved his left fielder slightly to the right, but, in effect, he had two men guarding the left side, whereas Boudreau had only one, and that the slow Seerey.

It is history that Williams was a complete "bust"

in the 1946 World Series. He was held down to five singles, one of them a bunt down the third base foul line. His hitting was undoubtedly affected by the Dyer version of the Boudreau shift and that, plus an unconfirmed report to the effect that the Red Sox planned to trade him, made him the most talked of figure in the World Series.

Actually, the Red Sox could hardly afford to let Williams go. He is baseball's greatest drawing card and at the height of his career as these lines are being written. In spite of the fact that Hank Greenberg of the Detroit Tigers caught and passed him in runs batted in and in home runs during the last stages of the 1946 season, Williams is still potentially the one man who may some day break the home run record of sixty for a season, which has been held by Babe Ruth since 1927. Williams also failed to lead the league in batting, since Mickey Vernon of the Washington Senators paced the field with a .353 mark. Williams, at .342, finished second. He was second to Greenberg by four runs in runs batted in, with 123, and Greenberg's forty-four home runs were six better than the thirty-eight hit by Williams.

No lines on the Red Sox star would be complete without a word about the amazing performance he staged in the 1946 All-Star game. In that con-



test, which found the American League team crushing the National Leaguers 12-0, Williams got two singles and two home runs, and his second circuit clout was hit off Truett (Rip) Sewell of the Pittsburgh Pirates, who tossed up his famous "ephus" pitch, a high, agonizingly slow ball which, to be hit, must be smashed with tremendous power. Williams propelled it into the bull pen in right field for a home run. It was, according to Sewell, the first time his "ephus" ball had ever been hit out of the park.

## WILLIAMS' 1946 RECORD

| Team   | League   | G   | AB  | R   | H   | HR | RBI | P.C. |
|--------|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|
| Boston | American | 151 | 514 | 142 | 176 | 38 | 123 | .342 |

## RUDY YORK

(Sixth Series—By Harold Kaese and others)

When the Boston Red Sox sent Eddie Lake to the Detroit Tigers in exchange for the ageing Rudy York, there were some mild protests from the Boston fans. Lake, although he was not needed in the 1946 Red Sox plans, since Johnny Pesky, their great shortstop, was returning from the navy, was young and fast, and York was nearing the end of a long career as a slugger.

The mild protests welled into a crescendo of

screaming wails when, as the spring training period ended, York looked so bad that Manager Joe Cronin was seriously considering starting Paul Campbell, his substitute initial sacker, at first base. Time after time, York came to the plate and futilely swung at almost everything that was thrown up to him by opposing pitchers.

And then the regular season began. The thirty-three-year-old Indian from Georgia suddenly snapped out of his slump, and, during the entire season, he was a member in good standing of the select Red Sox murderers' row at the plate, which included York, Dom DiMaggio, Ted Williams, Bobby Doerr and Johnny Pesky.

York did more than win games for the Red Sox with his tremendous bat and save base hits with his stellar play around first base. He turned out to be an inspiration to the whole team. His good humor, his willingness to help youngsters, his anxiety to prove that he still had many good years of baseball left in his system, his whole attitude, had much to do with the success of the Red Sox and their winning of the pennant.

York had left two home run hitting mates in Detroit in Hank Greenberg and Dick Wakefield and joined two more in Williams and Doerr. He won more than one game for the Red Sox with his

big bat and, on one day late in the season, he hit two successive home runs with the bases filled and drove in twelve runs, all in one game.

It was York who won the first game of the World Series in St. Louis when his tenth-inning home run, which nearly cleared the left field bleachers at Sportsman's Park, broke up the ball game.

Again in the third game, after the Cardinals had evened the series by winning the second, York put the Red Sox back into the lead by hitting a long home run in the first inning with two men on which gave Dave Ferriss of the Red Sox a lead which was never relinquished. The Red Sox won that one, 4 to 0, and York batted in three of the runs and scored two of them himself.

For the rest of the series, it was York, not Williams, whom the Cardinals feared. The heavy-hitting Indian smashed the ball to all fields, but he hit no more home runs. At least three times, however, he was robbed of extra base hits on great catches by Terry Moore and Enos Slaughter in the St. Louis outfield.

Altogether, York hit sixteen home runs during the regular season and two in the World Series. He was a prime factor in the winning of the pennant by the Red Sox, and he kept them in the fight for the world's championship by winning

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two games virtually single-handedly. If it had not been for York's two World Series home runs, it is quite possible that the Cardinals would have won the series in less than seven games, instead of being forced to the limit.

### YORK'S 1946 RECORD

| Team   | League   | G   | AB  | R  | H   | HR | RBI | P.C. |
|--------|----------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|------|
| Boston | American | 154 | 579 | 78 | 159 | 16 | 119 | .276 |

### YORK'S 1946 WORLD SERIES RECORD

|        |          |   |    |   |   |   |   |      |
|--------|----------|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|
| Boston | American | 7 | 23 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 5 | .261 |
|--------|----------|---|----|---|---|---|---|------|

## MILDRED (BABE) DIDRIKSON ZAHARIAS

(Third Series—By LeRoy Atkinson and  
Austen Lake)

Mrs. George Zaharias was still popularly known as Babe Didrikson and still a champion in 1946. She first caught the limelight when, in 1932, she won virtually every important event in the Olympic Games at Los Angeles. She had, besides being a track and field star, won a high local reputation in Texas as a basketball player.

Several years after the Los Angeles Olympics, the then Miss Didrikson took up golf. For years, she struggled along in this new field. In the meantime, she married George Zaharias, a professional

wrestler. Then, for awhile, she dropped out of the sports limelight.

In 1946, she suddenly blossomed as the greatest woman golfer in America. She took part in most of the major open tournaments as a professional, and, in both tournaments and exhibitions, she began smashing course records all over the country. She laughed at women's par and often shot championship testing courses in the low seventies, to match and sometimes break men's par.

Her victory in the Women's Western Open Championship stamped her as the best of her sex on the links. She won several major and minor titles, although her field was somewhat limited, since there are few women's golf events open to professionals. She also did very well in exhibition matches.

Mrs. Zaharias is one of the most remarkable athletes in the world, since she has won fame in three different sports and now, in her middle thirties, she has reached the peak in a game which she never played as a young girl. At Gullane, Scotland, on June 12, 1947, the onetime Olympic javelin thrower became the first American-born golfer to win the British Women's championship golfing crown.



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